



L-Università
ta' Malta

Self-Assessment Report

January 2023



Merħba fl-Università ta' Malta

Welcome to the
University of Malta

*Serving students, scholarship
and society, sustainably.*

Process and structure of the Self-Assessment Report

This Self-Assessment Report (SAR) presents an opportunity for the University of Malta (UM) to enhance its quality provision and to share the outcomes of a consistent process kickstarted in 2015, in which the University community has been actively involved in discussion, evaluation, review, planning, implementation and self-analysis. This SAR has contributed to a greater appreciation of UM's accomplishments, a broader understanding of the areas requiring further developments, and a more comprehensive approach to constant quality enhancement at all levels.

The Self-Assessment Report approach and process

In May 2015 the Senate reconstituted the Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) to review the Quality Assurance (QA) structures of the University at the time, so as to ensure the enhancement of institutional quality culture. The QAC includes two Senate and *Kunsill Studenti Universitarji* (KSU) students' representatives and is assisted in this mission by the Quality Support Unit (QSU), which operates as the committee's administrative arm. In May 2017 a Pro-Rector for International Development & Quality Assurance was appointed by the Senate and was entrusted with the chairpersonship of the QAC, whose primary role is to "undertake and monitor the Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) processes and procedures within the University".

After laying the foundation for a roadmap to permeate a quality culture and enhancement in all areas, the QAC now monitors progress through the identification of critical gaps and provides guidance on how to address them. The QAC's participative approach focuses on a university-wide process that involves all the various academic and administrative entities while working in close collaboration with the Internal Audit Function (IAF). The starting point was to plan how to target the 2015 External Quality Assurance (EQA) audit recommendations appropriately, followed by an evaluation of the current situation to determine how any remaining gaps can best be bridged. The QSU was entrusted with coordinating the whole process and reporting to the QAC during its monthly meetings.

The process behind the compilation of this SAR involved all the concerned entities across the University in collaboration with the QSU, which undertook a self-evaluation vis-à-vis the practices currently in place, the University's main strengths and its primary challenges. This information was used as the basis for the drafting of improvement action plans for the future, including a strategy of prioritisation in each area.

After the QSU completed the drafting of this SAR based on the information and supporting evidence provided by the relevant departments and in full coordination with their representatives, the SAR was then reviewed and analysed by the concerned

entities. Further information and clarifications were received and the draft was revised and amended accordingly. Afterwards, the draft document underwent a design and branding process, to be subsequently shared with the Rector, the QAC members and other concerned individuals for their final feedback and reflections. The QSU took all such feedback on board to produce this final SAR which was endorsed by the Rector, UM's top management and the QAC.

The structure of the Self-Assessment Report

UM's Self-Assessment Report 2023 begins with this introductory note followed by messages from the Rector, the Pro-Rector for International Development & Quality Assurance and the President of the *Kunsill Studenti Universitarji* (University Students' Council).

A table of contents outlines the document's structure and is followed by an 'Introduction & overview' section that provides general information and basic facts about the University, including its mission statement, areas of academic provision, strategic objectives, and the characteristics of the UM student population.

This is followed by another section that clearly explains UM's governance, management and academic infrastructure, including the Faculties, Institutes, Centres, and Schools (FICS) as well as learning resources and support services available to staff and students.

Subsequently, a thorough commentary on the 11 Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) Standards as outlined in the National Quality Assurance Framework for Further and Higher Education is provided, together with a list of the supporting documents presented at the end of the SAR. The supporting documents are coded as "SD" followed by incremental digits starting from 001, and every code is clearly identified in the list provided in Section 4, which also indicates the section/s in which the evidence is featured.

The commentary on each Standard begins with an account of what UM is currently doing to meet the expectations in terms of the existing IQA systems and procedures. This is followed by an assessment of how effective these practices and procedures are in ensuring that UM is fully compliant with the Standard. A concluding statement for each Standard outlines why UM believes that it meets the Standard's requirements, followed by a proposal for future developments that addresses the identified areas in need of further enhancement that mirror the reflective evaluation and review.

Foreword from the Rector

It is totally proper that universities in Europe and elsewhere are requested to give periodic account of their work to their local communities who generally represent the main funders of these crucially important institutions. There is no exaggeration in claiming that the wealth and health of nations is largely owed to universities, among other intellectually-rich and powerful centres of excellence dedicated to the generation of knowledge and the training of highly-skilled individuals. The researchers employed in the knowledge industries and research academies are manned by personnel incubated and formed within the university systems of those countries. Hence it is of the essence that universities do their job well and to the highest agreed and internationally-benchmarked standards.

For this reason, we are thankful to the Malta Further & Higher Education Authority for its role in planning and conducting the present External Quality Assurance (EQA) audit; in particular, I am grateful to the five members constituting the expert peer review panel who accepted to take part in this onerous exercise and I promise them full cooperation and our readiness to facilitate their work as much as possible. I am convinced that the panel will provide us with rich insights and advice that should help us enhance and improve our processes.

It is not necessary for me to list here the significant improvements brought about at the University of Malta (UM) as a result of the first EQA audit conducted in 2015 since the improvements as well as any remaining challenges will be analysed and reflected upon in the current Self-Assessment Report. These observations will serve as ground for further necessary developments and corrections. I am confident that the audit about to launch will help us discover both strengths and hopefully only few weaknesses so that we can continue to move forward with confidence that we are serving our students and society well. May we better infuse the culture of quality in all our work and efforts, including more transparency, better accountability and a willingness and readiness to provide students with the best service and experience to help them grow into responsible, fair, ethically-sound and knowledgeable individuals. Society deserves and expects nothing less from UM.



PROFESSOR ALFRED J. VELLA
Rector

Foreword from the Pro-Rector

During the academic year 2022–2023, the University of Malta (UM) shall be undergoing its second cyclical External Quality Assurance (EQA) audit by the Malta Further & Higher Education Authority (MFHEA).

As part of this process, UM is hereby presenting a Self-Assessment Report (SAR) which was compiled by the Quality Support Unit (QSU) in collaboration with a significant number of colleagues. It provides a detailed and evidence-based narrative of UM's enhancement journey since its first EQA audit in 2015.

The compilation of this SAR serves as another opportunity for introspection, to take a step back and analyse UM's successes with a critical eye. This steers UM to always strive for excellence and map out future directions in the best interest of our students. Furthermore, this SAR is a valuable source for the esteemed review panel members ahead of their onsite audit visit.

As Pro-Rector for International Development & Quality Assurance, I welcome this opportunity to walk the review panel members through an account of what UM has been doing to address each of the 11 Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) Standards as outlined in the National Quality Assurance Framework for Further & Higher Education in Malta. UM is pleased to present this SAR which demonstrates its compliance to the MFHEA IQA Standards, while identifying various evidence-based strengths and accomplishments as well as recognising areas for further development.

The University has developed a more streamlined and better integrated IQA where the ultimate purpose is to foster a quality culture through consistent and regular internal professional dialogue on quality. UM is cognisant that quality is key to fulfil its important role in the social, economic, environmental and political development of our island. Therefore, UM views internal and external quality assurance as complementary and as a synergy to celebrate good practices and identify further developments.

Both the higher education and the quality assurance landscape are changing in significant ways. We are committed and look forward to consistently create an environment of trust, as new and improved ideas are addressed in a professional learning and research community setting and where the diversified student body experience is at the focus of all our efforts.



PROFESSOR FRANK BEZZINA
Pro-Rector, International
Development & Quality Assurance

Foreword from the KSU President

As University students, our participation in Quality Assurance exercises is integral for the development and improvement of our academic experiences at the University of Malta (UM). It is in the interest of our academic enrichment to partake in such periodic accounts, and the *Kunsill Studenti Universitarji* (KSU) strives to promote such exercises together with the University. Through our strong relations both with UM and with the numerous student societies present on campus, KSU as the University Students' Council appreciates the platform students are given to present their perspectives and feedback in such exercises.

Ultimately, it is us students who benefit from such exercises and audits. Through our hands-on experience in the several teaching and assessment methods used within this institution, this should translate into a responsibility to offer such feedback to strive for the improvements students yearn for. As students, we are grateful for the preparation and involvement in such an onerous exercise, and hope to see such levels of involvement continue beyond such exercises.

I would also like to thank the Malta Further & Higher Education Authority, who have constantly kept a close line of communication with KSU. This has led to a fruitful relationship which brought forth many ideas, proposals and discussions that continuously prioritise the holistic wellbeing of UM students.

I would personally like to thank the five members forming part of the peer review panel, and I have no doubt that such exercise will result in thought-provoking feedback and advice that will be of benefit to the institution at large. As always, KSU remains at the panel's disposal.



MS ALEXANDRA GAGLIONE
President, KSU

*The contents of this Self-Assessment Report (SAR) address and are in line with the requirements as per MFHEA letter dated 24 October 2022 and the guidance in Annex 1 of the **External Quality Assurance Provider Audit Manual of Procedures (SD378)**.*

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Acronyms

AACC	Active Ageing and Community Care	FICS	Faculties, Institutes, Centres and Schools	PHRR	Programme Human Resource Requirements
ACTED	Access to Tertiary Education for Persons with Disability	GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation	PPR	Periodic Programme Review
ADSC	ACCESS Disability Support Committee	GESDC	Gender Equality & Sexual Diversity Committee	PSO	Project Support Office
ADSU	ACCESS Disability Support Unit	HEI	Higher Education Institution	PVC	Programme Validation Committee
AIMS	Administrative Information Management System	HR	Human Resources	QA	Quality Assurance
APQRU	Academic Programmes Quality & Resources Unit	HRMD	Office for Human Resources Management & Development	QAA	Quality Assurance Agency
APR	Annual Programme Review	IAF	Internal Audit Function	QAC	Quality Assurance Committee
ARC	Audit & Risk Committee	ICT	Information & Communication Technology	QR	Quick Response
ARF	Academic Resources Fund	IPES	Institute for Physical Education & Sport	QSU	Quality Support Unit
ARO	Admissions & Records Office	IPV	Intimate Partner Violence	RIDT	Research, Innovation & Development Trust
BI	Business Intelligence	IQA	Internal Quality Assurance	RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
CAN	Course Access Needs	IQR	Internal Quality Review	RSSD	Research Support Services Directorate
CELP	Centre for English Language Proficiency	ISEP	International Student Exchange Programme	SAS	Students Advisory Services
CIO	Chief Information Officer	IT	Information Technology	SASP	Student Athlete Support Programme
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019	JC	Junior College	SC	Stakeholders' Committee
CPD	Continuous Professional Development	KPI	Key Performance Indicator	SD	Supporting Document
CRC	Cottonera Resource Centre	KSU	<i>Kunsill Studenti Universitarji</i>	SDC	Secondary Data Centre
CREA	Committee on Race & Ethnic Affairs	KTO	Knowledge Transfer Office	SEA-EU	European University of the Seas
CSU	Counselling Services Unit	LGBTIQ	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender/Transsexual, Intersex and Queer/Questioning	SIMS	Student Information Management System
DMM	Dar Manwel Magri	MATSEC	Matriculation and Secondary Education Certificate	SMART	Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound
DPO	Data Protection Officer	MBB	Malta Business Bureau	SMS	Short Message Service
EAEC	European Association of Erasmus Coordinators	MCAO	Marketing, Communications & Alumni Office	SQL	Structured Query Language
ECA	English Communicative Aptitude programme	MDH	Mater Dei Hospital	SSF	Student Solidarity Fund
ECTS	European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System	MESA	Malta Employees Sports Association	THE	Times Higher Education
ECVET	European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training	MFHEA	Malta Further & Higher Education Authority	U3A	University of the Third Age Malta
EEA	European Education Area	MOU	Memorandum of Understanding	UCL	University College London
EHEA	European Higher Education Area	MQF	Malta Qualifications Framework	UK	United Kingdom
EQA	External Quality Assurance	MUDU	Malta University Debating Union	UM	University of Malta
ERP	Enterprise Resource Planning	MUIP	Malta University Innovation Portfolio Ltd	UPS	Uninterruptible Power Supply
ESF	European Structural Funds	MUSC	Malta University Sports Club	UREC	University Research Ethics Committee
ESG	European Standards & Guidelines	NCFHE	National Commission for Further & Higher Education	US	United States
eSIMS	electronic Student Information Management System	NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation	VLE	Virtual Learning Environment
EU	European Union	OAR@UM	Open Access Repository	VLEEC	Visiting Lecturers & External Examiners Committee
EUA	European University Association	OPAD	Office for Professional Academic Development	WHO	World Health Organization
EUCEN	European University Continuing Education Network	PDCA	Plan-Do-Check-Act cycle		

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1. Introduction and overview

1.1. The University of Malta

Lying at the crossroads of the Mediterranean, the University of Malta (UM) has been, over its 400-year history, the hub for international academic exchange on the island. UM is the leading higher education institution in Malta and its structures are in line with the **Bologna Process (SD001)** and the European Higher Education Area.

At UM we carry out **academic research (SD002)** and provide a vibrant higher education setting in the arts, sciences and the humanities as required for Malta's economic, social and cultural development. Our **courses (SD003)** are designed to produce highly-qualified professionals in multiple disciplines. Our alumni community is growing exponentially: well over 3,500 students graduate in various disciplines annually.

We are committed to high standards of research and teaching, and every member of staff at UM plays an important role and contributes to an outstanding student experience.

1.2. Vision, mission and values

The University of Malta is committed to serving students, scholarship and society sustainably. The vision, mission and values of UM are driven by our community's desire to advance and succeed in embracing new challenges and in implementing new initiatives. Our vision is to be among the leading institutions in higher education, contributing to the development of our region, our country and society in general. Our community of scholars endeavours to maintain the highest standards in education and strives to ensure that what we deliver is fit for the purpose of serving industry and the country in general, keeping the economic, the environmental and the social wellbeing in our focus.

This is expressed in our **mission statement (SD004)** which is **"to serve the aspirations of the people of these islands through locally and globally significant research and the provision of quality higher education in the arts, sciences and the humanities as required for Malta's economic, social and cultural development, via the scholarship of discovery, teaching and service to the community. These functions shall be delivered in a sustainable manner that is responsive to this country's present and emergent needs"**.

As a member of the European Higher Education Area, the University of Malta is committed to the values of academic freedom, institutional autonomy, good governance, accountability, equality and social responsibility working in partnership with students. This commitment is sealed in the *Magna Charta Universitatum*, which we signed together with another 387 rectors in Bologna in 1988.

1.3. Strategic objectives

The vision, mission and values of the University of Malta are reflected in the **Strategic Plan 2020–2025 (SD005)** which sets out the goals and priorities for the University, its Faculties, Departments, Institutes, Centres and Schools (FICS). The plan approved by the Senate on 30 May 2019 and by the Council on 21 June 2019, reflects the evolving state of higher education, society, industry and the economy. It focuses on students' experience, resources, contribution of the academic community and the University's impact on the nation as well as the insights of the wider University community and social partners.

Our presence on the island has certainly left its mark on the industries and the education of the local population. As a dynamic tertiary education institution, we have always reacted proactively to the needs and demands of the nation and the recent years were no exception. In fact, during the academic year 2018–19 the entire University community of 15,000 students and staff, as well as its external stakeholders, were invited to actively participate in the strategic planning process through strategy conferences, working groups, advisory committees and surveys.

The Strategic Plan is supported by a comprehensive implementation plan led by the Rector and the Strategic Theme leaders and through the internal audit and quality assurance processes.

The University's internal and external stakeholders remain vital to the implementation of the plan. The strategy has eight core components as represented and summarised below.

- I. **Learning and Teaching (SD006)**
- II. **Research and Knowledge Transfer (SD007)**
- III. **Societal Factors and Impact (SD008)**
- IV. **Enterprise and Industry Impact (SD009)**
- V. **National Impact (SD010)**
- VI. **International Outlook (SD011)**
- VII. **Sustainability (SD012)**
- VIII. **Services and Administrative Support (SD013)**

1.4. Facts and figures

QUALIFICATIONS CONFERRED

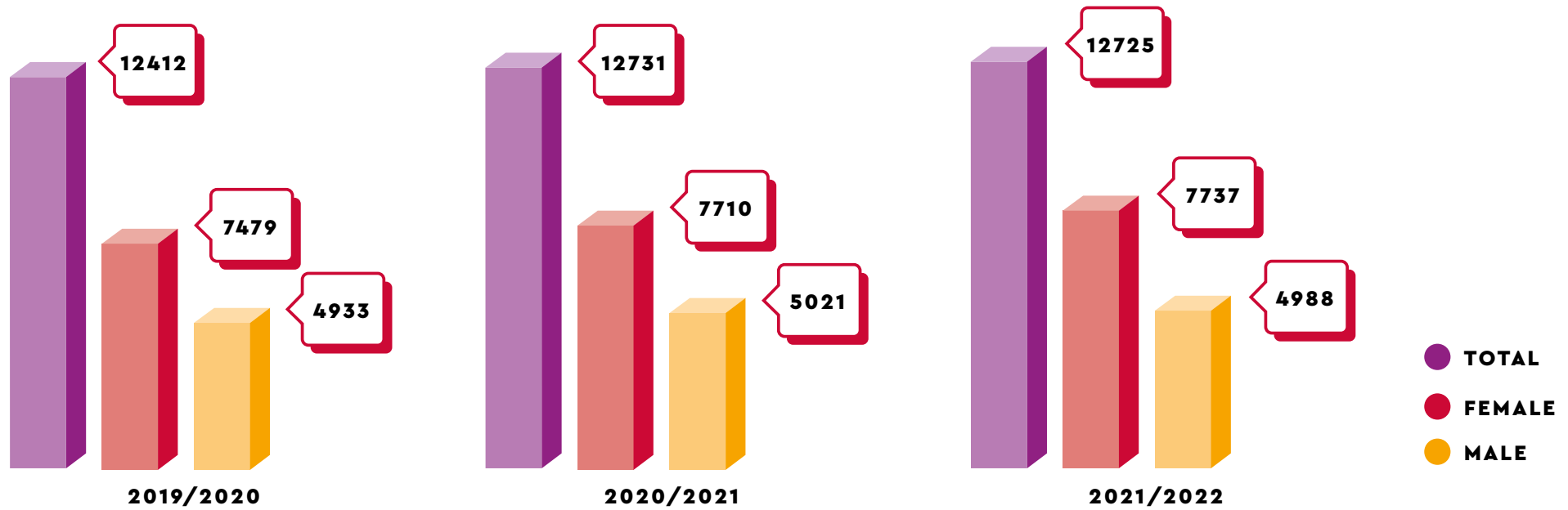
CATEGORY	NOVEMBER 2020			NOVEMBER 2021/MARCH 2022			NOVEMBER 2022/MARCH 2023*		
	F	M	TOTAL	F	M	TOTAL	F	M	TOTAL
Pre-Tertiary Certificates	9	4	13	6	9	15 ¹	29	35	64 ¹
Certificates	76	62	138	61	30	91 ¹	85	27	112 ¹
Diplomas	203	165	368	187	134	321 ¹	207	174	381 ¹
Undergraduate Degrees	1143	736	1879	1100	645	1745 ¹	935	588	1523 ¹
Postgraduate Certificates	67	12	79	101	31	132 ¹	43	18	61 ¹
Postgraduate Diplomas	43	23	66	44	21	65 ¹	52	18	80 ¹
Master Degrees	43	411	1051	755	568	1323 ²	492	318	810 ²
Professional Doctorates	43	2	14	7	4	11 ²	4	1	5 ²
Doctoral Degrees	43	21	40	18	31	49 ²	10	15	25 ²
TOTAL AWARDS	2212	1436	3648	2279	1473	3752	1857	1204	3061*

¹ Graduations held in November Ceremonies

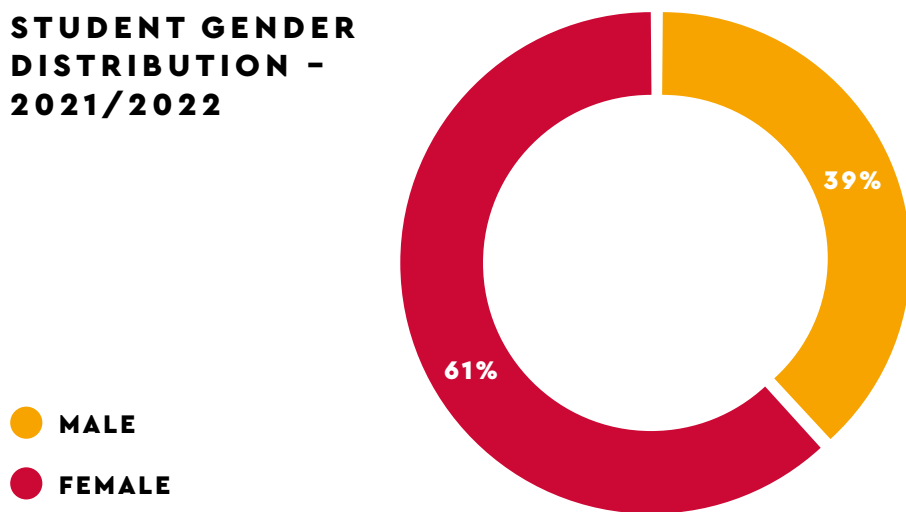
² Graduations held in March/April Ceremonies

* Results are still being published

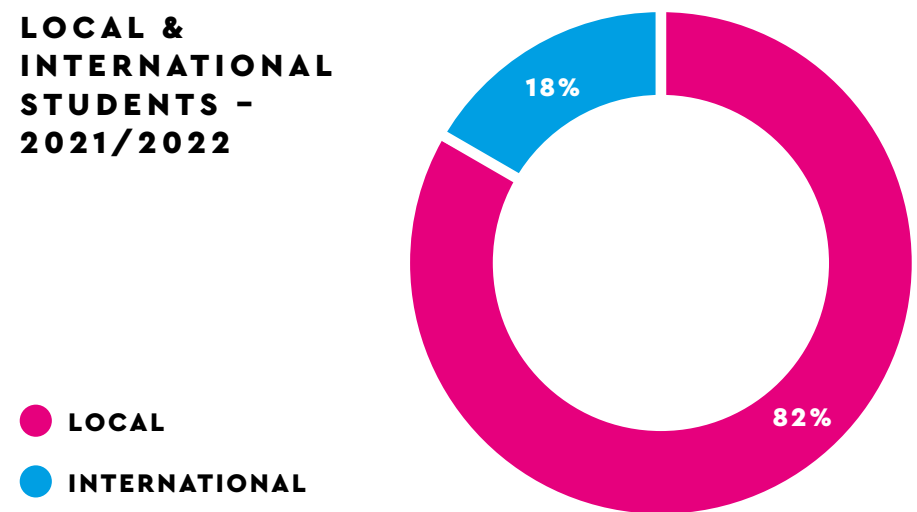
REGISTERED STUDENTS (FULL-TIME AND PART-TIME INCLUDING VISITING AND ERASMUS+ STUDENTS)



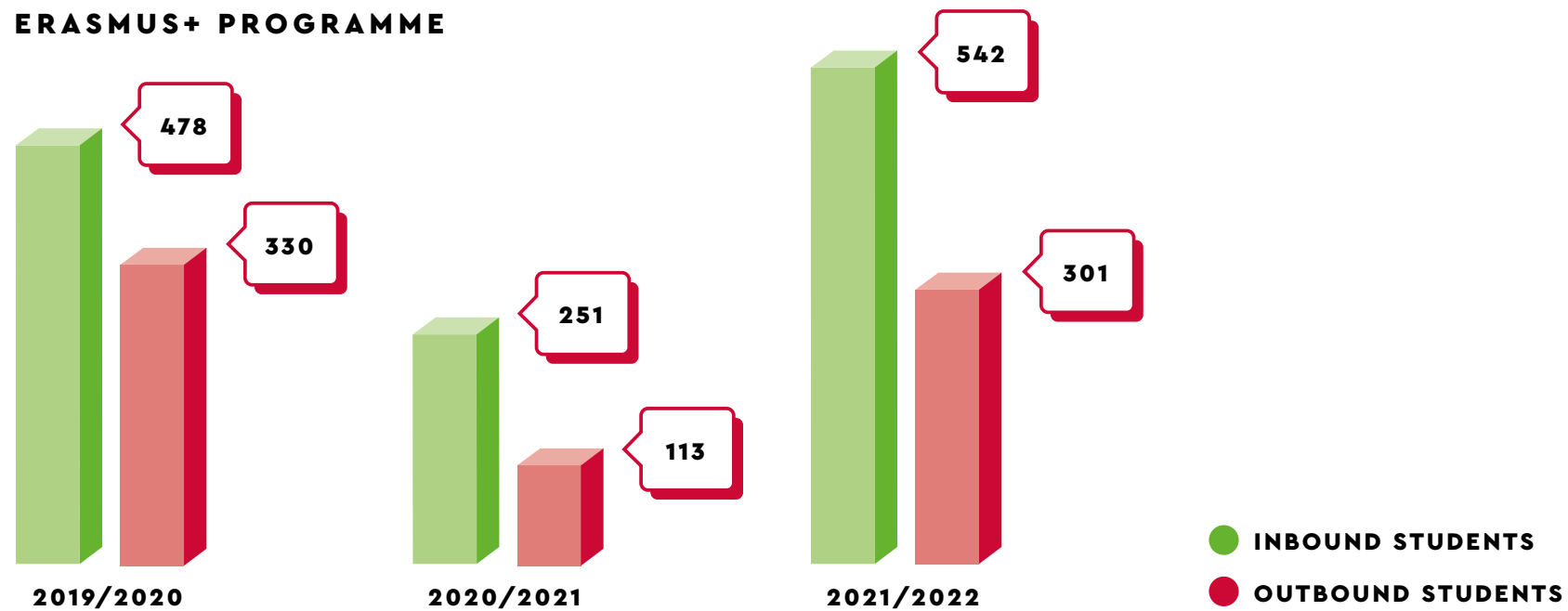
STUDENT GENDER DISTRIBUTION - 2021/2022



LOCAL & INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS - 2021/2022



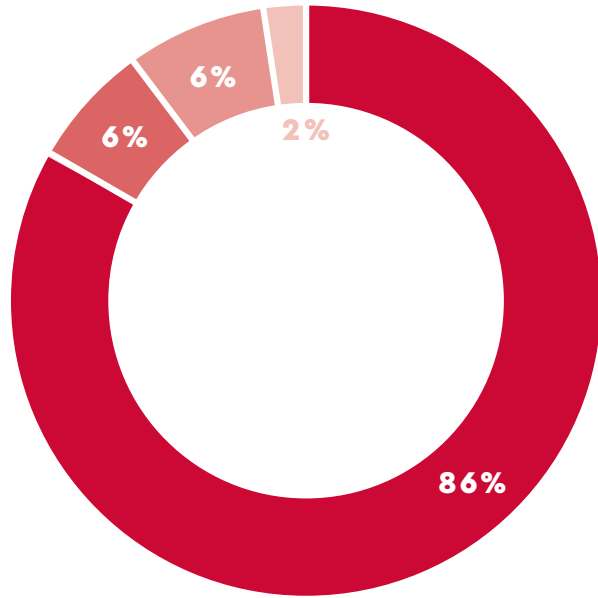
ERASMUS+ PROGRAMME



PROGRAMMES OFFERED



REGISTERED STUDENTS' DISTRIBUTION ACROSS FICS



- FACULTIES
- INSTITUTES
- CENTRES
- SCHOOLS

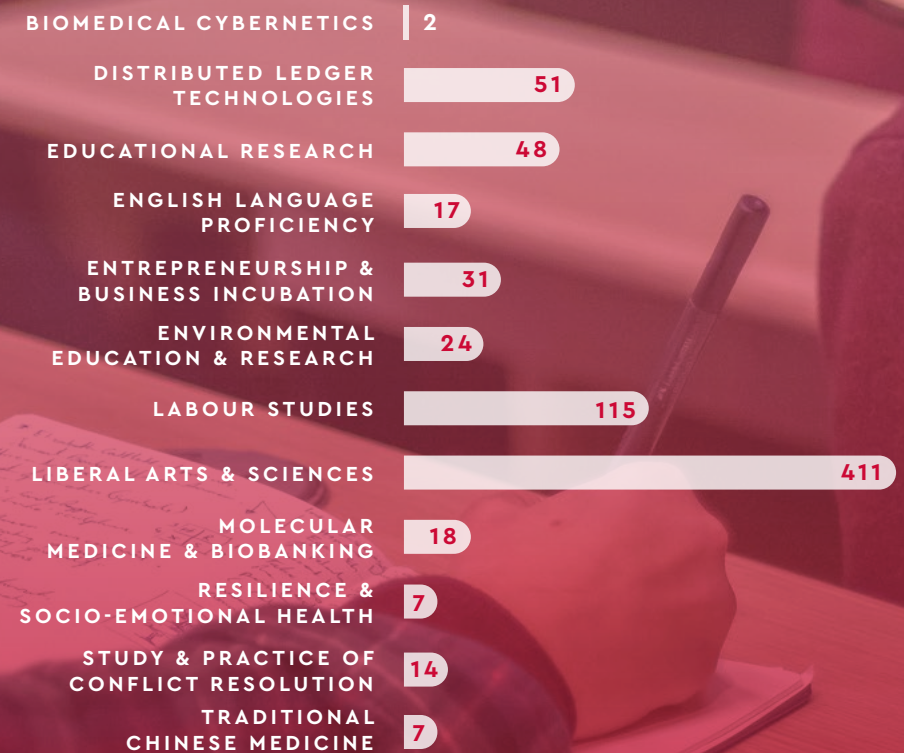
REGISTERED STUDENTS - FACULTIES



REGISTERED STUDENTS - INSTITUTES



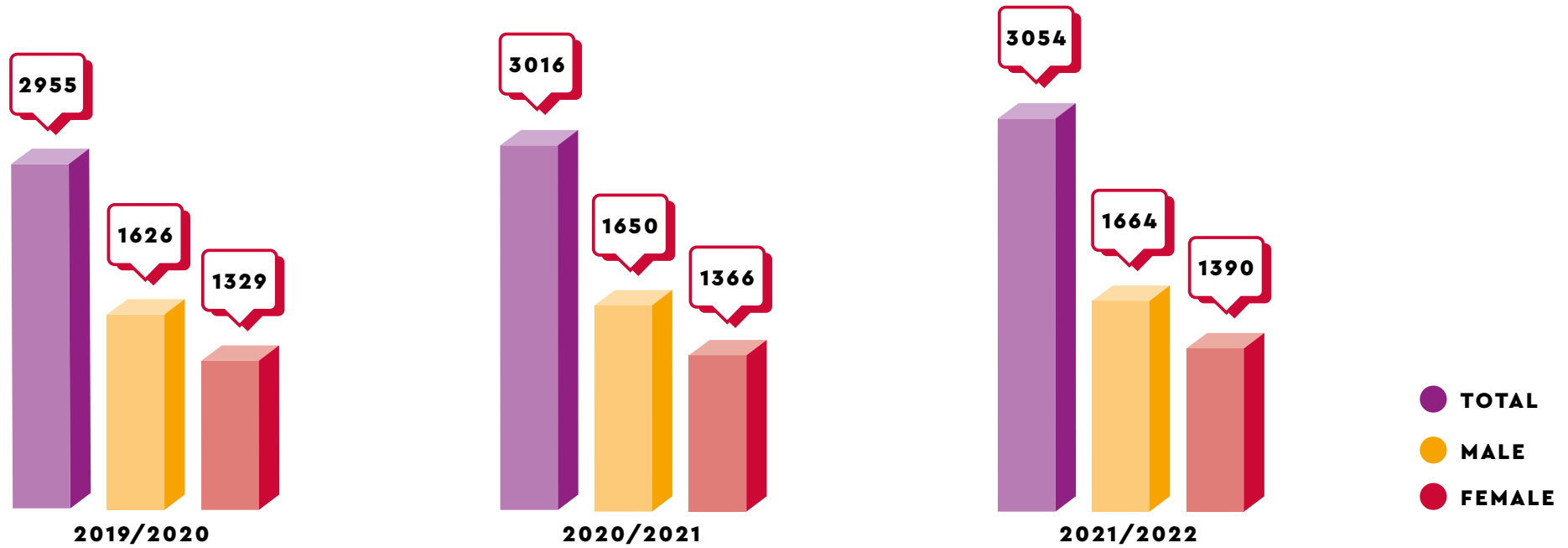
REGISTERED STUDENTS - CENTRES



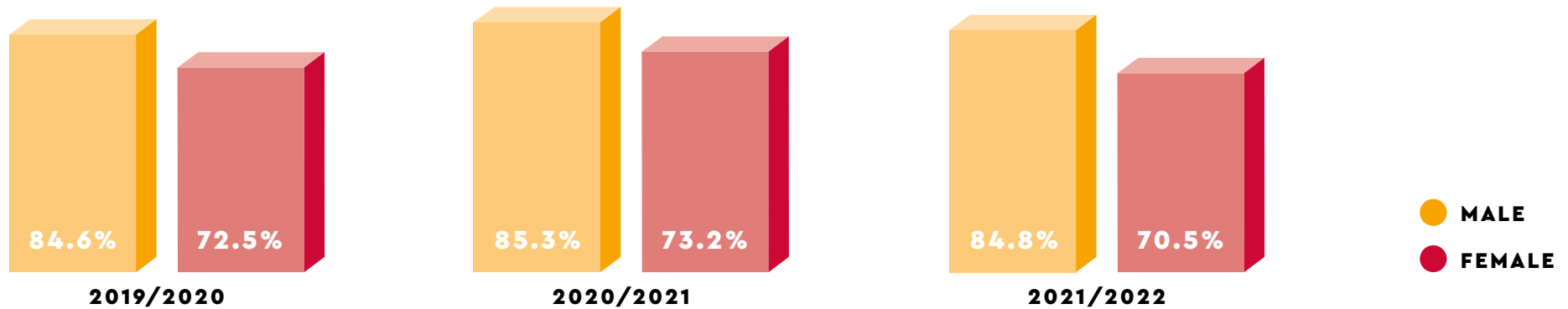
REGISTERED STUDENTS - SCHOOLS



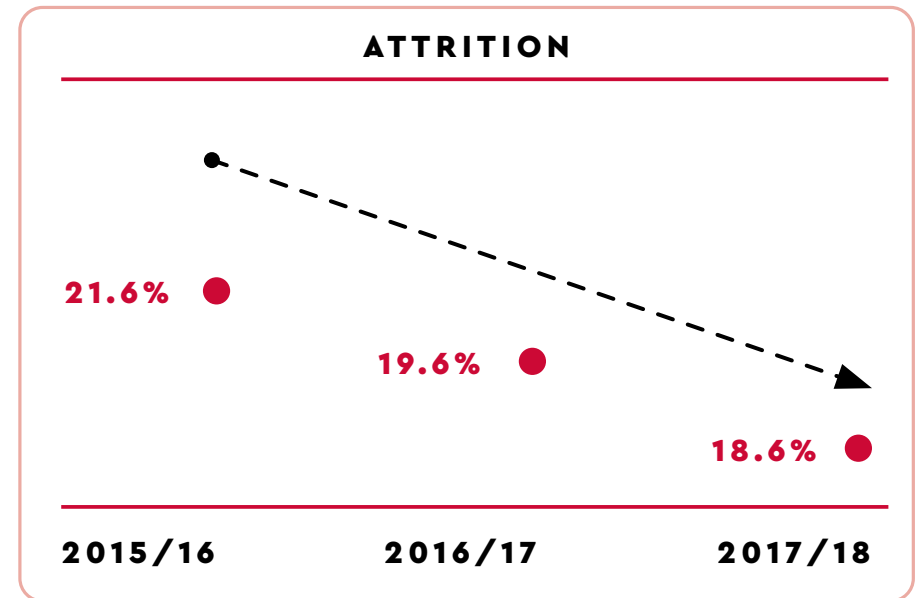
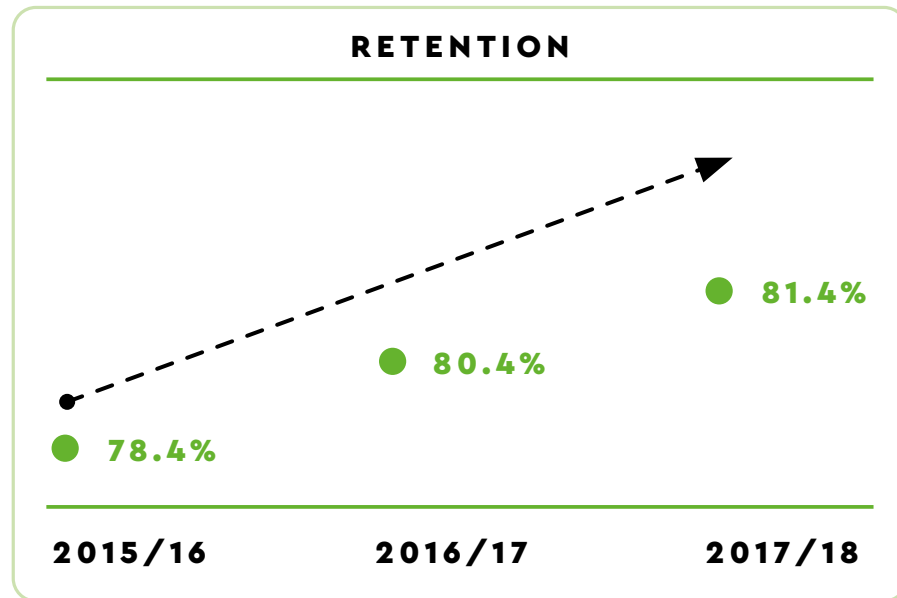
STAFF NUMBERS (ACADEMIC, TECHNICAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE)



PERCENTAGE OF RESIDENT ACADEMICS WITH DOCTORATES



RETENTION AND ATTRITION RATES



* Undergraduate degree programmes followed on a full-time basis calculated on students commencing their studies in the academic years 2015/16, 2016/17 and 2017/18.

40%

of the students making up the attrition rate joined another programme at UM in the subsequent year

1.5. KSU – The *Kunsill Studenti Universitarji*

History of the University Students' Council

The *Kunsill Studenti Universitarji* is the oldest national student union in Europe. KSU was founded by Arturo Mercieca (later Chief Justice Sir Arturo Mercieca) in 1901, as the *Comitato Permanente Universitario* and it involved itself in student politics as well as national politics. Despite the fact that several years have gone by since the day when KSU was founded in 1901, KSU's aims remain unaltered. Students' contribution is undeniably fundamental for the betterment of the University and society in general. KSU is founded on the ideology that life at the University of Malta is much more than simply academia but is the ideal forum where students can engage in active participation. Students should be given the opportunity to express their ideas regarding pertinent issues.

Aims & Functions

- ⤵ **Empowering students:** To give a voice and empower students in order to encourage them to both seek opportunities whereby they are able to contribute towards society, whilst also providing them with such opportunities.
- ⤵ **Democracy and transparency:** To work in favour of democracy and of transparency in education and to eliminate all forms of inequality and/or negative discrimination and/or any form of unjust obstacle to a complete higher education experience.
- ⤵ **Consultation:** To always consult with other stakeholders, including student organisations, the University of Malta, the Government, Unions, and other student representatives, teachers and lecturers.
- ⤵ **Autonomy:** When reasonably practicable and possible, to coordinate its activities with those of other organisations without sacrificing its autonomy.
- ⤵ **Student body:** To always seek to meet the general interest of all the student body through its behaviour and decisions.
- ⤵ **Lifelong learning:** To promote the value of lifelong learning as a right and as a means for a larger aim.
- ⤵ **Awareness:** To cultivate an educational, social and cultural awareness amongst the students.
- ⤵ **Higher education:** To put pressure on the authorities concerned to ensure that the quality and level of higher education is the best possible quality.

The **council (SD014)** is made up of thirteen members and has a wide and diverse representation such as the **Gozo Liaison Officer (SD015)**, **the Student Organisations (SD016)** and **Student Representatives (SD017)** at all levels of decision-making bodies at UM.

1.6. Global partners

Our **International Office (SD218)** recognises the value of international cooperation and networking. We are fully aware of the importance of our participation in the international higher education sphere. In fact, over the past 10 years, we have subscribed to and joined several higher education networks at both regional and international level. We have been actively participating in: Compostela Group of Universities, European Association of Erasmus Coordinators (EAEC), European University Association (EUA), European University Continuing Education Network (EUCEN), International Student Exchange Programme (ISEP), RETI Network – the Excellence Network of Island Territories, Santander Group European Universities Network, UK Naric and Utrecht Network.

In addition to our participation in EU programmes such as Erasmus+, we have agreements with multiple international universities around the globe, such as with universities in Australia (Victoria University of Technology, University of Melbourne, University of Sydney – Faculty of Health Sciences), Canada (Bishop's University, Dalhousie University, St. Thomas University, Trent University, Huron College, University of Guelph, University of Prince Edward Island), China (Xiamen University, Shanghai University of Traditional Chinese Medicine), Japan (Akita International University, Kansai Gaidai University, Yokohama National University), India (Manipal University), and the United States (Clarion University, Gardner-Webb University, University of North Carolina, Oakland University, Pittsburg State University). For the last 10 years, we have also ventured into international collaborative partnerships with US institutions such as George Mason University and James Madison University and offered collaborative masters programmes leading to dual/double degrees.

1.6.1. European University of the Seas

The University of Malta is also a proud member of the **European University of the Seas (SEA-EU) (SD363)** – an alliance of six universities whose vision is "to establish a distinctly international, pluri-ethnic, multilingual and interdisciplinary European University". Following an initial three-year phase, the alliance has grown to nine universities, in line with its growing ambitions. This project is funded by the European Commission with the aim of developing the 'European University of the 21st century'.

This is the first project of its kind that seeks to establish an alliance among European universities. As part of this consortium, the University of Malta seeks to enhance the links between teaching, research, innovation and knowledge transfer by committing itself to the highest quality standards in education and research.

UM's involvement aims to benefit students and staff through opportunities for increased mobility and an increased focus on the enhancement of the quality, inclusiveness and competitiveness of higher education in Europe. As the project's primary stakeholders and beneficiaries, students are involved in all levels of the alliance's operations and decision-making processes.

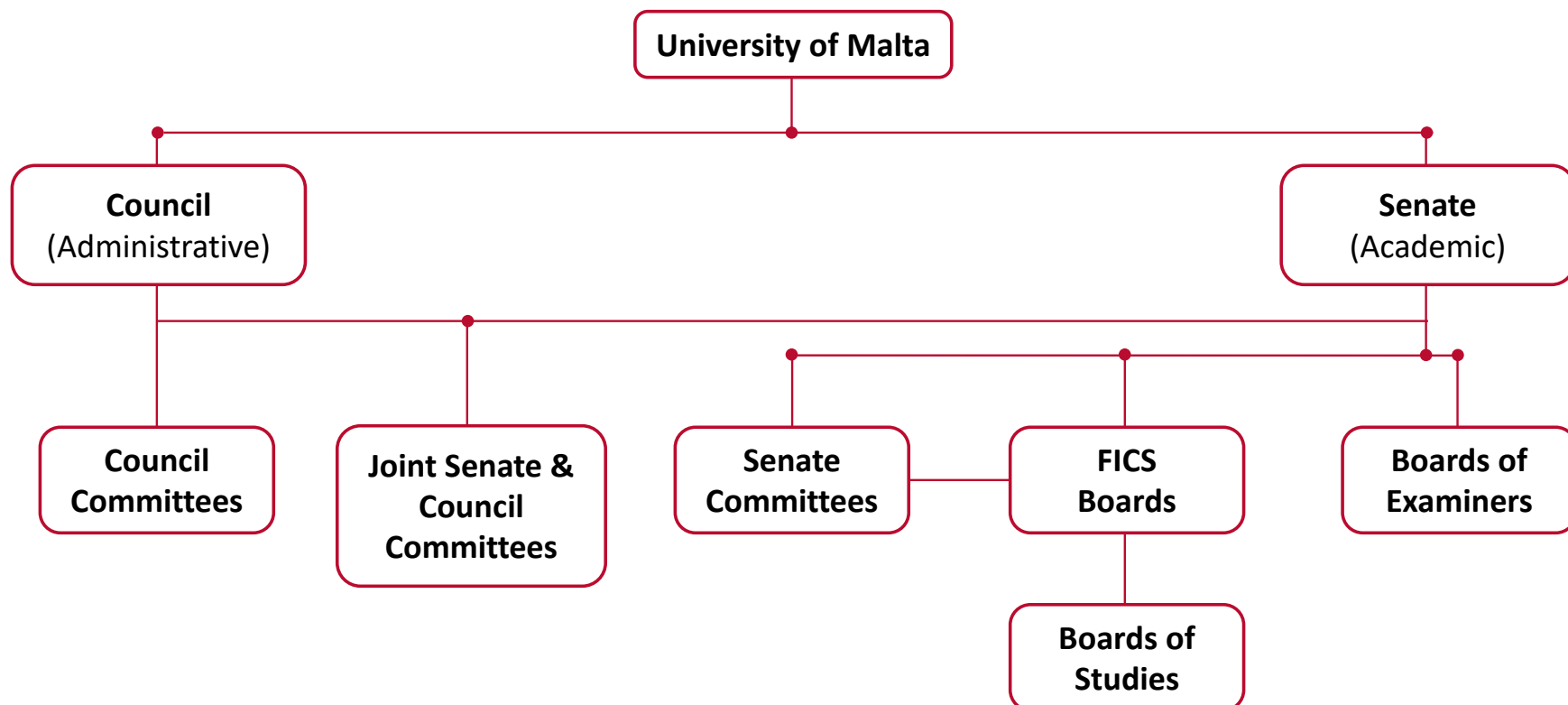
2. Governance, management and academic infrastructure

2.1. Governing bodies

UM is currently constituted and governed in accordance with Part VII of the **Education Act** (Chapter 327 of the Laws of Malta) (**SD018**).



Governing Bodies



The Council

The Council is responsible for the general administration of the University including the appointment of new academic and administrative members of staff. The Council is chaired by the Pro-Chancellor.

The Senate

The Senate deals with academic matters and quality. It regulates studies, research, documentation and examinations at the University. One of the most important functions of the Senate is the approval of changes to the Admissions Regulations. The Senate is presided by the Rector.

The Senate and the Council are assisted in their mission by a number of **boards and committees (SD019)**, to which are delegated specific responsibilities as per the figure overleaf.

Council* Committees

Academic Resources Funds Committee (SD020)
Administrative, Technical and Industrial Staff Work Resources Committee (SD021)
Audit and Risk Committee (SD022)
Board of Discipline for Administrative, Technical and Industrial Staff (SD023)
Committee for Council Rules of Procedure (SD024)
Committee to consider extension of appointments of Academic Staff (SD025)
Finance Committee (SD026)
Gender Equality and Sexual Diversity Committee (SD027)
IT Services Committee (SD028)
Medical Board for University Members of Staff (SD029)
Safety Committee (SD030)
Shortlisting Committee for the appointment of Directors of Institutes/Centres/Schools (SD031)
Staff Affairs Committee (SD032)
Staff Scholarships and Bursaries Committee (SD033)
Student Affairs Committee (including Travel Grants, Bursaries, Scholarships) (SD034)
University House Liaison Committee (SD035)


Joint Senate & Council Committees

Academic Promotions Board A* (Lecturers, Senior Lecturers and Junior College Academics) (SD037)
Academic Promotions Board B* (Associate Professors and Professors) (SD038)
ACCESS Disability Support Committee (SD039)
Committee for Research Engagement (SD040)
Committee for Safeguarding the Code of Professional Academic Conduct (SD041)
Committee for Sustainability at the University of Malta (C-SUM)* (SD042)
Committee on Race and Ethnic Affairs (SD043)
Research Fund Committee (SD044)
University Equity Committee (SD045)
University Honours Committee (SD046)
Visiting Lecturers and External Examiners Committee (SD047)

Senate* Committees

Animal Welfare Committee (SD048)
Board to Review Reason for Absence from Assessments* (SD049)
Committee for Students' Requests (SD050)
Committee for Student Societies* (SD051)
Committee for the Implementation of the Students' Charter (SD052)
Committee of Discipline (regarding Students' Misconduct)* (SD053)
Committee when students/applicants present a Police Conduct Certificate* (SD054)
Digital Education Committee (SD055)
Doctoral Academic Committee* (SD056)
Editorial Board – Malta University Press (SD057)
Library Committee* (SD058)
Ph.D. and Master (research) Degrees Scholarship Selection Board (SD059)
Professional Development Committee for the Doctoral School* (SD060)
Programme Validation Committee (SD204)
Quality Assurance Committee (SD061)
Selection Committee for the Lindau Nobel Laureate Meetings (SD062)
UM Fitness to Practise Board (SD063)
University Admissions Board* (SD064)
University Assessment Appellate Board* (SD065)
University Assessment Disciplinary Board* (SD066)
University Research Ethics Committee (SD067)
Web Editorial Board (SD068)

*Statutory board/committee



The **Boards of Faculties, Institutes, Centres and Schools (FICS)** direct the academic tasks of their respective entity. These Boards meet regularly, typically once every two months, and present their plans, proposals and recommendations to the Senate for approval.

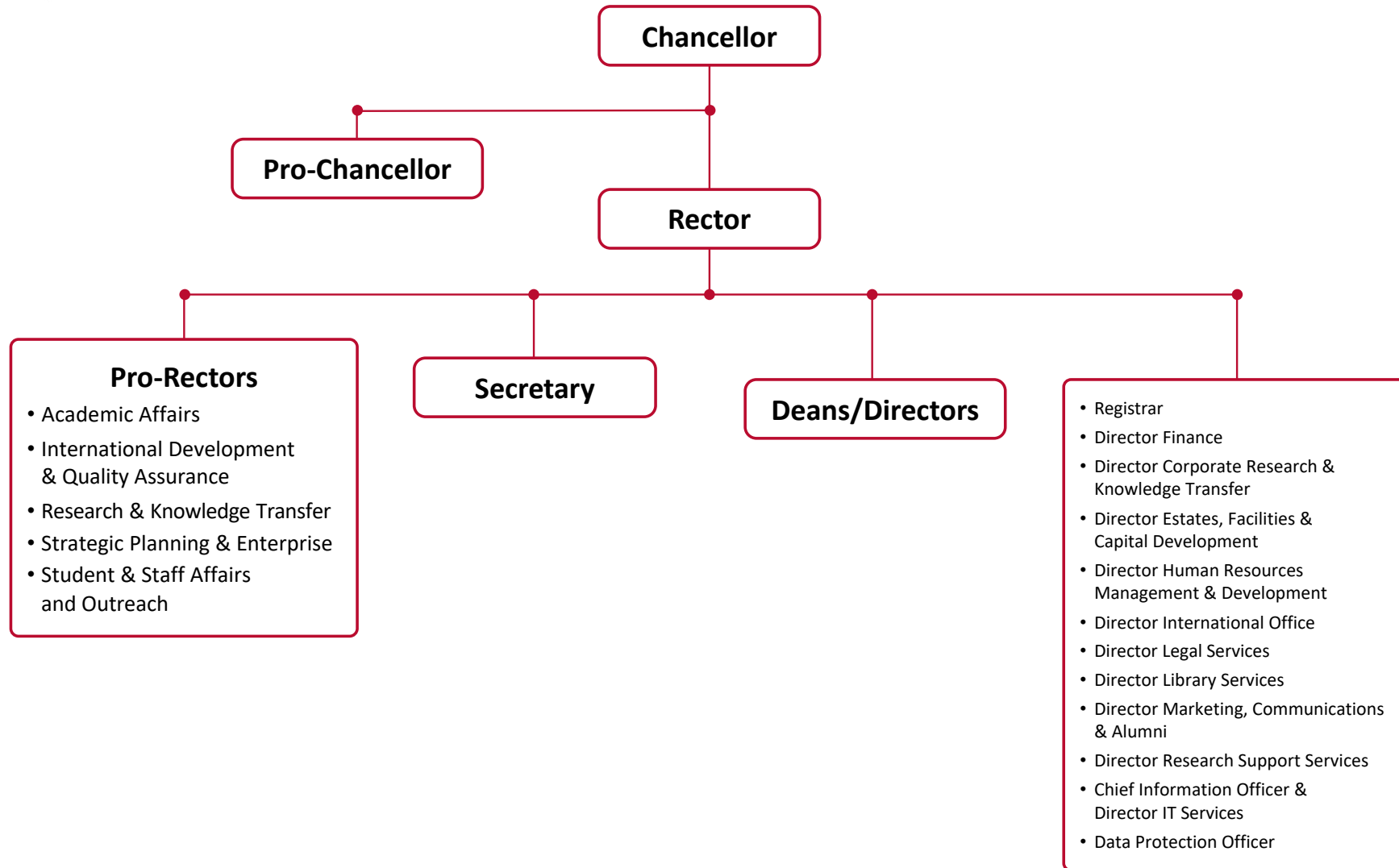
Boards of Studies for each area of study are appointed by the Senate on the recommendation of the FICS Board and are responsible for the implementation of regulations and bye-laws governing the programme. They are further responsible for the monitoring and evaluation of programmes and for making any recommendations for its improvement; moreover, the Boards of Studies also monitor assessment procedures and students' performance and progression.

The **Board of Examiners** for each study-unit assessment is appointed by the Senate on the recommendation of the FICS Board and is responsible for the preparation of the assessment (including marking schemes) to ensure that it meets the requirements and learning outcomes of the study-unit and that it covers the subject content specified in the study-unit description. Moreover, this Board is responsible for the marking of scripts or any other work submitted for assessment, as well as the moderation and award of the final marks. It is to review the marks of students who do not obtain an overall pass mark for a study-unit before the final result is agreed upon and published. More details may be found in the University's **Assessment Regulations (SD069)**.

2.2. Principal and other officers



Principal & Other Officers



The Chancellor

The Chancellor is the highest officer of the University and is responsible for ensuring that it conforms with the law. The Chancellor is appointed by the President of Malta acting in accordance with the advice of the Prime Minister given after consultation with the Leader of the Opposition. The Chancellor promulgates the statutes, regulations and bye-laws drawn up by the governing bodies. In the Chancellor's absence, or whenever this office is temporarily vacant, the functions of the Chancellor are performed by the Pro-Chancellor who is the *ex officio* President of the Council.

The Rector

The Rector, who is appointed by the Council, is the principal academic and administrative officer of the University and is responsible for the day-to-day administration. The Rector is *ex officio* President of the Senate and FICS Boards, and is vested with the legal representation of the University. The Rector has delegated duties to five Pro-Rectors as follows:

- ⤵ Pro-Rector for Academic Affairs
- ⤵ Pro-Rector for International Development & Quality Assurance
- ⤵ Pro-Rector for Research & Knowledge Transfer
- ⤵ Pro-Rector for Strategic Planning & Enterprise, and
- ⤵ Pro-Rector for Student & Staff Affairs and Outreach.

The **Secretary** is the second highest administrative officer of the University and is appointed by the Council for a term of five years.

Deans of Faculties are elected for a term of four years by the academic staff of that Faculty and from among the heads of departments of the Faculty. They act as *ex officio* president of the Faculty Board in the absence of the Rector (who normally does not preside over these meetings).

The other officers of the University include the Registrar, the Director of Finance, the Director of Corporate Research & Knowledge Transfer, the Director of Estates, Facilities & Capital Development, the Director of Human Resources Management & Development, the Director of the International Office, the Director of Legal Services, the Director of Library Services, the Director of Marketing, Communications & Alumni, the Director of Research Support Services, the Chief Information Officer & Director of IT Services, and the Data Protection Officer. These are appointed following a transparent public call for applications and a recruitment procedure that ensures that the incumbents are fit for purpose for the selected role.

2.3 Top management

Prof. David J Attard (SD070)	Chancellor
Perit Karmenu Vella (SD071)	Pro-Chancellor
Prof. Alfred J Vella (SD072)	Rector
Prof. Frank Bezzina (SD073)	Pro-Rector for International Development & Quality Assurance
Prof. Joseph M Cacciottolo (SD074)	Pro-Rector for Academic Affairs
Prof. Ing. Simon G Fabri (SD075)	Pro-Rector for Research & Knowledge Transfer
Prof. Carmen Sammut (SD076)	Pro-Rector for Student & Staff Affairs and Outreach
Prof. Tanya Sammut-Bonnici (SD077)	Pro-Rector for Strategic Planning & Enterprise
Mr Simon Sammut (SD078)	University Secretary
Dr Colin Borg (SD079)	Academic Registrar
Mr Mark Debono (SD080)	Administrative Director, Finance Office
Dr Ing. Anton Bartolo (SD081)	Administrative Director, Corporate Research and Knowledge Transfer
Perit Christopher Spiteri (SD082)	Administrative Director, Estates, Facilities & Capital Development Directorate
Ms Jacqueline Fenech (SD083)	Administrative Director, Office for Human Resources Management & Development
Ms Stefania Agius Fabri (SD084)	Administrative Director, International Office
Dr Angele Attard Chetcuti (SD085)	Administrative Director, Legal Services
Mr Kevin Joseph Ellul (SD086)	Administrative Director, Library
Mr Pierre Cassar (SD087)	Administrative Director, Marketing, Communications & Alumni Office
Dr Christian Bonnici (SD088)	Administrative Director, Research Support Services
Mr Robert Sultana (SD089)	Chief Information Officer and Director IT Services
Dr Luisa Spiteri Baluci (SD090)	Data Protection Officer
Mr Dario Pirotta (SD091)	Administrative Director, Matriculation Non-Academic

DEANS OF FACULTIES	
Prof. Dominic Fenech (SD092)	Dean, Faculty of Arts (SD141)
Prof. Alex Torpiano (SD093)	Dean, Faculty for the Built Environment (SD142)
Prof. Nikolai J Attard (SD094)	Dean, Faculty of Dental Surgery (SD143)
Dr Emanuel Said (SD095)	Dean, Faculty of Economics, Management & Accountancy (SD144)
Prof. Colin Calleja (SD096)	Dean, Faculty of Education (SD145)
Prof. Ing. Andrew Sammut (SD097)	Dean, Faculty of Engineering (SD146)
Dr Stephen Lungaro Mifsud (SD098)	Dean, Faculty of Health Sciences (SD147)
Prof. Ing. Carl James Debono (SD099)	Dean, Faculty of Information & Communication Technology (SD148)
Dr Ivan Mifsud (SD100)	Dean, Faculty of Laws (SD149)
Prof. Noellie Brockdorff (SD101)	Dean, Faculty of Media & Knowledge Sciences (SD150)
Prof. Godfrey LaFerla (SD102)	Dean, Faculty of Medicine & Surgery (SD151)
Prof. Emmanuel Sinagra (SD103)	Dean, Faculty of Science (SD152)
Prof. Andrew Azzopardi (SD104)	Dean, Faculty for Social Wellbeing (SD153)
Rev. Dr Stefan Attard (SD105)	Dean, Faculty of Theology (SD154)

DIRECTORS OF INSTITUTES	
Prof. Ing. David Zammit Mangion (SD106)	Director, Institute of Aerospace Technologies (SD155)
Prof. Gloria Lauri Lucente (SD107)	Director, Institute of Anglo-Italian Studies (SD156)
Prof. Denis De Lucca (SD108)	Director, International Institute for Baroque Studies (SD157)
Prof. Maria Attard (SD109)	Director, Institute for Climate Change & Sustainable Development (SD158)
Dr Dennis Mizzi (SD110)	Co-Director, Confucius Institute (SD159)
Prof. Ji Nengwen (SD111)	Co-Director, Confucius Institute (SD159)
Dr Margaret Mangion (SD112)	Director, The Edward de Bono Institute for Creative Thinking & Innovation (SD161)

Prof. Georgios N. Yannakakis (SD113)	Director, Institute of Digital Games (SD162)
Prof. Stephen Calleya (SD114)	Director, Mediterranean Academy of Diplomatic Studies (SD163)
Prof. Everaldo Attard (SD115)	Director, Institute of Earth Systems (SD164)
Prof. Mark Harwood (SD116)	Director, Institute for European Studies (SD165)
Dr Stefano Moncada (SD117)	Director, Islands and Small States Institute (SD166)
Prof. Stavros Assimakopoulos (SD118)	Director, Institute of Linguistics & Language Technology (SD167)
Prof. Carmel Cassar (SD119)	Director, Institute of Maltese Studies (SD168)
Prof. Norbert Bugeja (SD120)	Director, Mediterranean Institute (SD169)
Dr Andrew Decelis (SD121)	Director, Institute for Physical Education & Sport (SD170)
Prof. Kristian Zarb Adami (SD122)	Director, Institute of Space Sciences & Astronomy (SD171)
Prof. Luciano Mule Stagno (SD123)	Director, Institute for Sustainable Energy (SD172)
Prof. Marie Avellino (SD124)	Director, Institute for Tourism, Travel & Culture (SD173)

DIRECTORS OF CENTRES	
Prof. Ing. Kenneth P. Camilleri (SD125)	Director, Centre for Biomedical Cybernetics (SD174)
Prof. Joshua Ellul (SD126)	Director, Centre for Distributed Ledger Technologies (SD175)
Prof. Ronald G. Sultana (SD127)	Director, Euro-Mediterranean Centre for Educational Research (SD176)
Dr Odette Vassallo (SD128)	Director, Centre for English Language Proficiency (SD177)
Prof. Russell Smith (SD129)	Director, Centre for Entrepreneurship & Business Incubation (SD178)
Prof. Mark C Mifsud (SD130)	Director, Centre for Environmental Education & Research (SD179)
Dr Luke Anthony Fiorini (SD131)	Director, Centre for Labour Studies (SD180)
Prof. David Mifsud (SD132)	Director, Centre for the Liberal Arts & Sciences (SD181)
Prof. Charles L Mifsud (SD133)	Director, Centre for Literacy (SD182)
Prof. Richard Muscat (SD134)	Director, Centre for Molecular Medicine & Biobanking (SD183)

Prof. Carmel Cefai (SD135)	Director, Centre for Resilience & Socio-Emotional Health (SD184)
Prof. Gordon Sammut (SD136)	Director, Centre for the Study & Practice of Conflict Resolution (SD185)
Prof. Charles Savona Ventura (SD137)	Director, Centre for Traditional Chinese Medicine (SD186)

DIRECTORS OF SCHOOLS	
Prof. Nicholas C Vella (SD138)	Director, Doctoral School (SD187)
Dr Omar NShea (SD139)	Director, International School for Foundation Studies (SD188)
Dr Stefan Aquilina (SD140)	Director, School of Performing Arts (SD189)

2.4. The University campuses

The **Main Campus at Msida (SD190)** (known as *Tal-Qroqq*) is where most of the activity takes place. It is spread over 250,207 square metres and includes the administration building, the main Library, the IT Services, buildings housing the FICS, Students' House, the Sports Complex, the Chaplaincy and a childcare centre.

The **Valletta Campus (SD191)** is the original seat of the *Collegium Melitense* and incorporates the *Aula Magna*. Today, this campus serves as a prestigious setting for the hosting of international conferences, seminars, short courses and summer schools. It is also the venue of:

- ⤵ the **Conferences & Events Unit (SD192)**
- ⤵ the **Centre for the Study & Practice of Conflict Resolution (SD185)**
- ⤵ the **Research, Innovation & Development Trust (RIDT) (SD193)**
- ⤵ the *Gibsoteka*

The **Gozo Campus (SD194)** was set up in 1992 in collaboration with the Ministry for Gozo. The administration of the Gozo Campus supports the organisation of part-time degree, diploma and short-term courses held in Gozo and also caters for some of the needs of Gozitan students who study on the main Msida Campus. The Gozo Campus also provides a venue for public lectures and seminars and it houses the Guesten Atmospheric Research Centre, within the Department of Physics. As from 2012 Gozitan students were given the possibility of sitting for end-of-semester examinations at the Gozo Campus.

The Solar Research Laboratory, of the **Institute for Sustainable Energy (SD172)** at UM, is located at the **Marsaxlokk Campus (SD195)**. This project makes use of pre-existing buildings in Marsaxlokk and consists of two laboratories and another small building which serves as a lecture room. The surrounding grounds, which have been recently restored, measure approximately 7,000 square metres.

2.5. The University's Faculties, Institutes, Centres and Schools (FICS)

The 14 Faculties at UM:

- ⊗ Arts
- ⊗ Built Environment
- ⊗ Dental Surgery
- ⊗ Economics, Management & Accountancy
- ⊗ Education
- ⊗ Engineering
- ⊗ Health Sciences
- ⊗ Information & Communication Technology
- ⊗ Laws
- ⊗ Media & Knowledge Sciences
- ⊗ Medicine & Surgery
- ⊗ Science
- ⊗ Social Wellbeing
- ⊗ Theology

The 18 interdisciplinary Institutes at UM:

- ⊗ Aerospace Technologies
- ⊗ Anglo-Italian
- ⊗ Baroque Studies
- ⊗ Climate Change & Sustainable Development
- ⊗ Confucius
- ⊗ Creative Thinking & Innovation
- ⊗ Digital Games
- ⊗ Diplomatic Studies
- ⊗ Earth Systems
- ⊗ European Studies
- ⊗ Islands & Small States
- ⊗ Linguistics & Language Technology
- ⊗ Maltese Studies
- ⊗ Mediterranean
- ⊗ Physical Education & Sport
- ⊗ Space Sciences & Astronomy
- ⊗ Sustainable Energy
- ⊗ Tourism, Travel & Culture

The 13 interdisciplinary Centres at UM:

- ⊗ Biomedical Cybernetics
- ⊗ Distributed Ledger Technologies
- ⊗ Educational Research
- ⊗ English Language Proficiency
- ⊗ Entrepreneurship & Business Incubation
- ⊗ Environmental Education & Research
- ⊗ Labour Studies
- ⊗ Liberal Arts & Sciences
- ⊗ Literacy
- ⊗ Molecular Medicine & Biobanking
- ⊗ Resilience & Socio-Emotional Health
- ⊗ Study & Practice of Conflict Resolution
- ⊗ Traditional Chinese Medicine

UM's three Schools:

- ⊗ Doctoral
- ⊗ Foundation Studies
- ⊗ Performing Arts

2.6. Learning resources and support arrangements to enhance the student experience

The student-to-staff ratio is one of the metrics which is used internationally as a measure of how well students are supported in an institution. The smaller the metric, the more engaged the lecturers are with their students and the more supportive is the learning and teaching environment.

The Times Higher Education (THE) World University Rankings in terms of student-to-staff ratio indicates that the first hundred universities in 2022 had ratios ranging from 0.9 to 8.0. It is pertinent to note that all top 10 universities are specialist medical institutions who largely have smaller student bodies with higher numbers of teaching staff. In this metric, UM has a score of 10.7 which places it with the best 10 universities in the UK, including Oxford (10.6), Cambridge (11.3), Imperial College (11.2), UCL (10.4), Edinburgh (11.8) and King's College (11.8).

We strive to keep on improving our learning and teaching facilities and social spaces. We are committed to providing students with an unforgettable experience. Whether one is in the mood for work, keeping fit or just wants to unwind, the University campus offers a variety of spaces, resources and support.

- ⤵ When students want to find space for studying, we provide several facilities where they can make the most of their time while on campus. Our state-of-the-art **IT Services (SD196)** building contains excellent spaces that are available until late evening hours. Supported by a team of experienced technicians, our IT Services facilities include, Open Access Learning Spaces & Lab, wireless access and eduroam, printing services, training rooms and IT support.
- ⤵ Our **Library (SD197)** is the only academic library in Malta and is the backbone of the diverse educational and research activities undertaken at UM as well as a crucial element in the successful intellectual and economic growth of the Maltese society at large. Through a wide array of support services offered both at the main library and its six branches, the institution provides access to state-of-the-art facilities and top-quality scholarly resources, including print and electronic collections, and develops the users' ability to effectively identify, locate, evaluate, use and synthesise information. Our library floor area is over 5,000 square metres and houses one million volumes and close to 60,000 e-journal subscriptions, most of which are available remotely 24/7.
- ⤵ We also have a variety of social spaces across our Main Campus, from a fully-fledged canteen to several gardens and common areas spread around the entire land surrounding the campus.
- ⤵ **DegreePlus (SD198)**, an initiative of the University of Malta, acknowledges that the university years are a time for personal growth and development. We strive to provide our students with an exciting and diverse range of opportunities to help broaden one's academic and non-academic horizons. The areas covered by DegreePlus include voluntary work, entrepreneurship, sport, culture and heritage, languages, music, creative and performing arts and several others.
- ⤵ The **Chaplaincy (SD199)** at the University of Malta provides spiritual support and pastoral care to staff and students of all faiths and none.
- ⤵ Our **Health & Wellness Centre (SD200)** is an integral part of the University of Malta and offers counselling to staff and students, and also participates in research, training and consultation.

- ⤵ A post office, an e-bike station and ATMs of different banks are also available on campus.
- ⤵ The **Help Hub (SD201)** has been set up to provide support to current students. It serves as a one-stop-shop that brings together many of the key services provided at UM in one easily accessible place.
- ⤵ Micro-credentials are perceived by UM as a means of creating efficient lifelong learning opportunities and that will play a critical role in the reshaping of the higher education sphere. Micro-credentials provide flexible and focused ways to assist people in developing the knowledge, skills and competences they need for their personal and/or professional development. In 2021/2022, UM had 33 stand-alone study-units with 477 registrations.
- ⤵ UM's vision on sport and physical activity is "to make sport and physical activity a central component of the student experience and to encourage all the University community to be active for life". Opportunities to participate in sport and increase physical activity levels are available to all students and staff. The DegreePlus initiative provides students with various **sport disciplines (SD202)** as opportunities to extend their UM experience beyond academia.

2.7 Equity, diversity and inclusion

The **Eurydice thematic report (SD203)** published in 2022 places Malta among the top-scoring European education systems in equity and inclusion in higher education. UM is the major contributor to this report which suggests that Malta currently has one of the most developed social dimension policies in higher education. The University of Malta supports all persons who have access requirements because of an impairment, medical condition or specific learning difficulties to ensure an inclusive community. Persons with access requirements may be students who satisfy the entry requirements of UM and wish to continue their education at tertiary level as well as members of staff who require support during their working time on campus. UM has updated its regulations to ensure reasonable accommodation to facilitate access, retention and completion of studies.

3. Commentary on the 11 IQA Standards

The UM Self-Assessment Report (SAR) as a whole, and the commentary on the 11 Standards in particular, are the final outcome of a long process of collaboration between various actors at the University who have been working hard over the last years to address the recommendations of the MFHEA's EQA audit in 2015. The commentary on the 11 Standards clearly explains how the University has been addressing the MFHEA's recommendations and how all the Standards' requirements and expectations have been successfully met. The commentary also exemplifies tangible samples of the best practices and unique initiatives at the University as well as identifies areas for improvements and future enhancement actions. The implementation of the actions that were put in place in response to the 2015 recommendations involved numerous stakeholders at the University where the coordination was led by the Quality Support Unit. The follow-up of the completion progress has been supervised by the Quality Assurance Committee. Feedback on the progress of implementation and further development was reported regularly to the Quality Assurance Committee which supervised and steered the implementation process and all the phases of preparing and finalising the SAR. The final version of this SAR was approved by the Rector, UM's top management and the QAC.

The commentary on each of the Standards includes the recommendations identified in the EQA audit report of 2015. Some recommendations are addressed in UM's response to other Standards which were deemed more relevant to the recommendation in question.

STANDARD 1: POLICY FOR INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE

MFHEA EQA 2015 Judgement	UM meets the Standard
MFHEA EQA 2015 Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UoM needs to develop a holistic quality assurance system which is owned and understood, by proactively disseminating and communicating the quality assurance policy and processes, together with the quality roles and responsibilities of all staff clearly articulated in their job descriptions, to both internal and external stakeholders. • UoM needs to develop mechanisms to review and evaluate the effectiveness of its quality assurance systems. • UoM needs to ensure that resources are available in Faculties and other entities including APQRU in order to ensure that the quality assurance policy and procedures are implemented effectively throughout all levels and structures of the organisation.

UM Response (What policies, procedures, systems are currently in place to meet this Standard)

1.1. Historical background of quality assurance at the University of Malta

The emergence of quality assurance in education discourse at all levels of provision in Malta stems from the **Education (Amendments) Act of 2006 (SD018)**. The Act for the first time included in its remit the establishment of academic audit and quality assurance schemes (Art. 72(g)). However, the endeavours of the University of Malta with respect to quality assurance predate the 2006 Education Act. For example, UM has had a long history of using external examiners to ensure appropriate standards in its undergraduate and postgraduate awards.

The University of Malta was one of the founding universities of the *Magna Charta Universitatum* that was signed on 18 September 1988 by 388 universities in Bologna, and that has now been signed by around 900 universities from 88 countries. The *Magna Charta* enshrines the principles of academic freedom and institutional autonomy as a guideline for good governance and self-understanding of universities in the future. It was the foundation for what, as from the year 2000, would become the Bologna Process, and the conceptual underpinning of the European Standards and Guidelines for Higher Education.

In 1996, the University of Malta set up its first Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) with the remit to introduce the concept of quality assurance in the academic and administrative practices of the University. This QAC introduced the first mechanism for student feedback of

programmes, and undertook the University's first internal audit in 2000. In 2007, this Committee was replaced by the **Programme Validation Committee** (PVC) **(SD204)** which set up rigorous processes for the approval and review of all University programmes of study. Through its administrative arm, the **Academic Programmes Quality & Resources Unit** (APQRU) **(SD205)**, the PVC reformatted the student feedback mechanism, and in 2014 introduced the system of **Periodic Programme Review** **(SD206)** for UM's Faculties, Institutes, Centres and Schools (FICS).

In 2015, the University experienced its first External Quality Assurance (EQA) audit undertaken by the **National Commission for Further & Higher Education** (NCFHE) **(SD207)**, indeed, the first EQA audit for a further or higher education institution accredited by the NCFHE (now known as Malta Further & Higher Education Authority [MFHEA]). This was a pilot, but fully-fledged EQA audit undertaken within the context of an ESF-funded project in which UM was a partner.

Partly as a result of the recommendations of the EQA audit report, a **Quality Assurance Committee** (QAC) **(SD061)** was reconstituted in 2015 to recommend the structure and remit of a permanent QAC that would have oversight of the internal and external quality assurance processes at UM. In 2017, a Pro-Rector for International Development & Quality Assurance was appointed. The QAC is supported administratively by the Quality Support Unit (QSU).

Quality Assurance processes were further strengthened through the setting up of the Internal Audit Function in 2019. Its role is defined in the **Internal Audit Activity Charter** **(SD208)**, which was approved by the Audit & Risk Committee on 31 January 2020 and encompasses all the activities of the University and its group of companies, including all operations, resources, staff, services and responsibilities to other bodies, with the exception of academic matters.

Moreover, on 30 September 2021, the Rector appointed the first Rector's Delegate for Quality Assurance. The roles and duties of the latter include:

- Engage in relevant discussions, visits and meetings that are organised by the University's Quality Support Unit (QSU)
- Liaise, discuss and update the University's QSU regarding matters concerning QA to ensure that a team approach is employed to address relevant issues; and
- Liaise with relevant administrative and academic entities as directed by the Pro-Rector for Quality Assurance to foster quality culture on campus.

1.2. Permeating a culture of quality through Internal Quality Assurance

Quality Assurance (QA) refers to practices whereby academic quality and standards are maintained and improved. QA in higher education aims at developing a quality culture within the institution, so that the actions of its staff and students are inspired by a desire to continuously improve their practice, learning experience and outcomes.

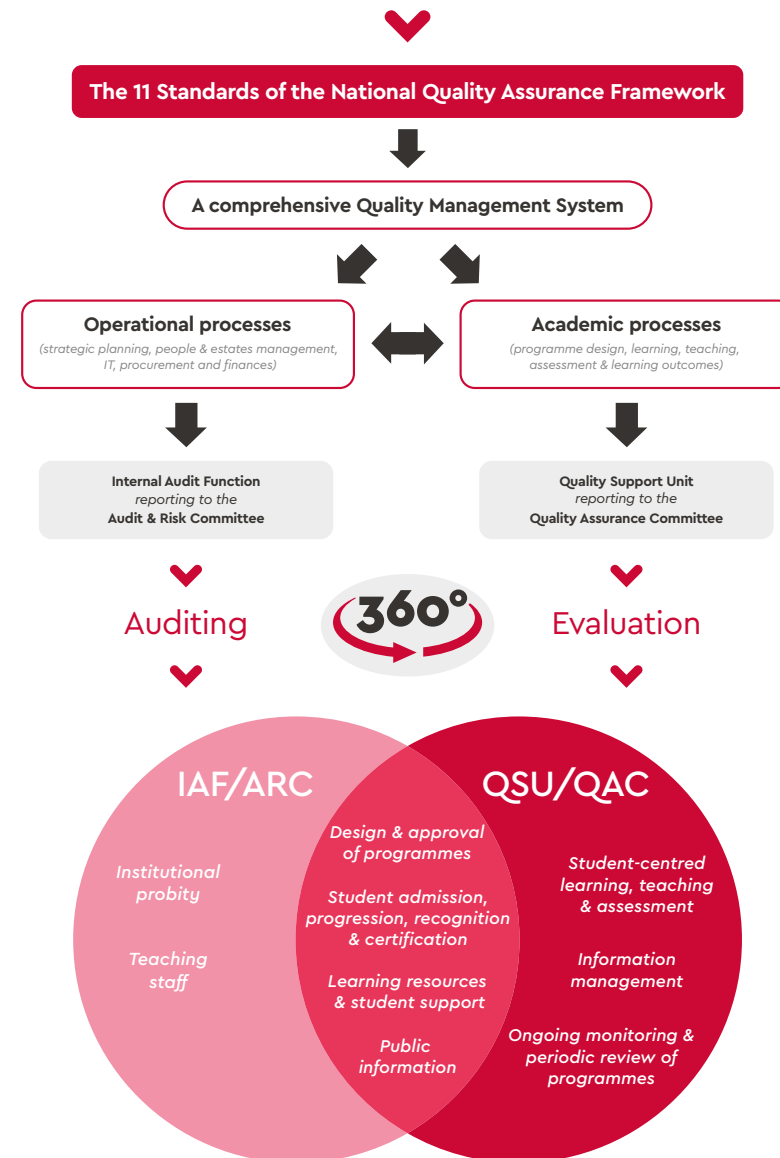
The University of Malta (UM) as a Higher Education Institution (HEI) is regulated by the **Malta Further & Higher Education Authority (MFHEA) (SD207)** which recognises UM as a self-accrediting HEI. The requirements that the University has quality assurance procedures in place and undertake quality assurance audits emanate from **Subsidiary Legislation 607.03 (SD210)** and the **National Quality Assurance Framework for Further and Higher Education (SD209)**.

The University is required to:

- have a quality assurance policy
- have effective and fit-for-purpose internal quality assurance (IQA) mechanisms that address all QA Standards of the National Framework
- undertake an external quality assurance (EQA) audit by the MFHEA, typically once every five years; and
- undertake an external review commissioned by the University as part of its IQA prior to such an EQA audit.

The **National Framework (SD209)** focuses on internal processes through which quality is assured and comprises 11 Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) Standards. These Standards include not just academic processes but extend to all areas of the institution's operations. This calls for a comprehensive quality management system consistent with the definition of Quality Management as *"an aggregate of measures taken regularly at system or institutional level in order to assure the quality of higher education with an emphasis on improving quality as a whole"*.¹ Consequently, managing the process of quality improvement is the responsibility of all Faculties, Institutes, Centres, Schools, Departments and staff at the University. Everyone on campus should recognise this as a priority expectation and that both academic (programme design, learning, teaching, assessment)

INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM



¹ Vlasceanu, L., Grünberg, L. & Pârlea, D. (2007). *Quality assurance and accreditation: A glossary of basic terms and definitions*. Bucharest: Centre Européen pour l'Enseignement Supérieur (CEPES).

as well as operational (strategic planning, people and estates management, IT, procurement and finances) processes contribute to and are essential to high quality outcomes.

Building on the EQA Audit Report's (2015) recommendation, the University of Malta embarked on establishing a comprehensive quality management system as shown in the figure above. This system aims for a quality improvement process which integrates seamlessly into the total institutional operation at 360° and includes both the academic as well as the other equally important operational (non-academic) quality improvement. UM's aim is to implement a dynamic cycle of Plan-Do-Act-Check (PDCA) in each process. Therefore, the quality management system combines planning, implementing, monitoring and review, and improvement mirroring the quality cycle in the **National Framework (SD209)**.

1.3. The Quality Assurance Committee

The Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) was reconstituted by Senate in May 2015 to review the current QA structures of the University so as to ensure that the quality culture of the University is further enhanced, and that staff and students are motivated to constantly improve their work, their learning environment and experience, and consequently their outcomes. Quality assurance is thus not about the 'ticking of boxes' simply to make sure that the appropriate academic procedures or processes are in place. It is about fostering an academic community of reflective practice that engages, both internally and externally, in an ongoing cycle of quality as an integral component of its striving for excellence in learning, teaching, research and outreach.

The membership of the current Quality Assurance Committee is available [here \(SD061\)](#). The terms of reference of the QAC are to:

- make recommendations for the development and updating of the Quality Policy of the University so as to foster its quality culture and support the implementation of the vision and strategy of the University
- identify quality indicators so as to monitor the implementation of the strategy and the fulfilment of the vision of the University
- access the necessary information so as to enable the Committee's oversight and monitoring functions
- undertake the necessary research on ways of improving the implementation and fulfilment of the said strategy and policy respectively
- provide feedback for improvement to staff and entities, including training, and to recommend proposals for improvement to Senate
- undertake and monitor the Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) processes and procedures within the University, including the external component of the IQA; and
- prepare for and coordinate External Quality Assurance (EQA) procedures of the University, as an integral part of its quality culture.

The QAC has recently established a comprehensive internal quality assurance framework (see Standard 10 for further information) which guides and promotes the continuous enhancement of quality and standards in all academic programmes. This framework was approved by the Senate on 10 March 2022. The aim is to streamline and bring together processes which were already being implemented across UM into one agreed-upon framework, and which will further strengthen the current QA mechanisms. The QAC publishes an annual report after it is discussed in the Senate.

1.4. Students' voice

The quality of educational outcomes in a HEI has the students at its focus since they are the primary stakeholders. Students' voice refers to the notion of student agency – when students participate actively in their education, collaborating and co-creating their own learning plan or pathway in a way that makes sense to them, thereby making learning more meaningful and engaging. Students' voice helps the students feel personally invested in their own learning and gives them a role in shaping and creating it, rather than it being simply transmitted to them.

At the University, students are given the opportunity to express their ideas regarding pertinent issues and have various channels to voice out their concerns, opinions, feedback and evaluations of programmes of study and other related issues. This is done primarily through the UM Student Council (**Kunsill Studenti Universitarji**) (SD014), **student societies** (SD280), **student representatives** (SD017) or through the newly established **Help Hub** (SD201) which serves as a one-stop-shop to UM's key services. For instance, the **Internal Quality Review panel** (SD206) for the Periodic Programme Review has permanent student members who attend the panel meetings and participate actively in the discussions and programme reviews.

The UM gives priority to working in partnership with the UM Student Council (KSU) and ensures that there are student representatives at all levels of decision-making bodies at the University. The KSU, student representatives and student societies are an integral part of campus life and play a key role in liaising between students and the various FICS. Moreover, they serve as a bridge and empower students to make their voice heard. It is for this reason that Internal Quality Assurance involves students at all levels. Through the students' participation and feedback, the University can sustain continuous enhancement while simultaneously increase student engagement in the process of Quality Assurance.

1.5. External stakeholders

As Malta's only national and state-funded university, UM has at heart its responsibilities towards national and societal development. Apart from providing the range and diversity of graduates required by society and the economy, for the present and the foreseeable future, UM is also a national hub and engine for creativity and innovation in all branches of knowledge, business, technology, art and science.

Consequently, UM is committed to engage with external stakeholders from industry, area-expert professionals, international peers, investors, governmental and non-governmental organisations, alumni, etc., to support their specific labour market and research needs. External stakeholders are involved in all levels of monitoring quality and standards in all academic programmes and their valuable feedback contributes to the quality enhancement processes as this is deemed to be a powerful information source that can drive UM's continuous development.

1.6. Sharing and celebrating good practices

For the past four years, the QAC and QSU have been identifying good practices at FICS level, to be shared through the Quality Mailshot

Initiative – a series of mailshots disseminated across the UM community roughly every fortnight during the academic year. The fourth series of mailshots is underway for the academic year 2022/2023. A report on the Quality Mailshot Initiative for 2021/2022 is available [here \(SD211\)](#). An online repository of all mailshots sent to date is available [here \(SD212\)](#).

1.7. The Internal Audit Function

The purpose of the University's **Internal Audit Function** (IAF) (**SD213**) is to provide independent, objective assurance and consulting services designed to add value and improve UM's operations. The mission of internal audit is to enhance and protect organisational value by providing risk-based and objective assurance, advice and insight. The IAF helps UM to accomplish its objectives by bringing a systematic and disciplined approach to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of governance, risk management and control processes.

The IAF is headed by the Chief Audit Executive (CAE) who reports functionally to the **Audit and Risk Committee** (ARC) (**SD022**) and administratively to the University Secretary, and is independent of all functional areas of the University. The ARC is a sub-committee of the Council and consists of a group of non-executive specialists selected for their business knowledge and expertise. The CAE has unrestricted access to, and communicates and interacts directly with, the ARC, including through private meetings without management present. The IAF is authorised to:

- have full, free, and unrestricted access to all functions, records, property, and personnel pertinent to carrying out any engagement, subject to accountability for confidentiality and safeguarding of records and information
- allocate resources, set frequencies, select subjects, determine scope of work, apply techniques required to accomplish audit objectives, and issue reports; and
- obtain assistance from the necessary UM personnel, as well as other specialised services from within or outside UM, in order to complete the engagement.

The IAF conducts internal audit activities that encompass, but are not limited to, objective examinations of evidence for the purpose of providing independent assessment to the Audit and Risk Committee and outside parties on the adequacy and effectiveness of governance, risk management, and control processes at UM. Internal audit assessments include the evaluation of whether:

- risks relating to the achievement of UM's strategic objectives are appropriately identified and managed
- the actions of UM's employees and contractors are in compliance with UM's policies, procedures, and applicable laws, regulations, and governance standards
- the results of operations or programs are consistent with established goals and objectives
- operations relating to the first and second line of defence functions are being carried out effectively and efficiently
- established processes and systems enable compliance with the policies, procedures, laws, and regulations that could significantly impact UM
- information and the means used to identify, measure, analyse, classify, and report such information are reliable and have integrity; and

- resources and assets are acquired economically, used efficiently, and protected adequately.

The IAF maintains a quality assurance and improvement programme that covers all aspects of its function. The programme includes an evaluation of the IAF's conformance with the Standards, evaluates whether internal auditors apply the Institute of Internal Auditors' Code of Ethics, assesses the efficiency and effectiveness of the IAF and identifies opportunities for improvement.

1.8. Institutional quality

The University of Malta produces various documents to ensure the University is effectively governed and managed. These documents include Statutes, Regulations, Bye-laws, Policies, Procedures, Guidelines, Forms and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). These documents protect the integrity and reputation of UM's academic and operational processes and reflect the governance structure of the University. Although all these documents are available on the University's website, they are not all collated into a single-source repository. UM is working to have a centralised single-source repository where internal and external stakeholders can easily access the most current version of any document whenever required. This would allow internal and external stakeholders to access these documents via a centralised source rather than through different webpages. The majority of central University documents can be made publicly available, although a few confidential documents may be password-protected. Moreover, for ease of access for both academic and administrative members of staff as well as students, these will be categorised and sorted by theme.

1.9. Statutes, Regulations and Bye-laws

The **Statutes, Regulations and Bye-laws (SD215)** are published as Legal Notices in the Malta Government Gazette and are legally binding documents which constitute the subsidiary legislation to the Education Act, Cap. 327 (**SD018**). These follow a standardised process and have a standard format.

The drafting and implementation of University Regulations and Statutes have always been a crucial item on the University's agenda since they serve as a roadmap in the day-to-day running of the institution. Such Regulations serve as a reference point for all University members of staff working within all the entities of the University to conduct business in a consistent and fair manner. Students are duly informed about the existence and provisions of such Regulations and are kept regularly informed about their responsibility to abide by the said Regulations at all times. The Office of the Registrar is responsible for preparing and processing Statutes, Regulations and Bye-laws in collaboration with the UM Legal Office.

The majority of University programmes are governed by the General Regulations for University Undergraduate and Postgraduate Awards which were drafted with the goal of streamlining the internal processes across the board. Way back in 2004, the first set of the General Regulations for University Undergraduate Awards came into force. Since then a number of amendments to these Regulations were implemented following feedback received from students and staff. In 2008, the University introduced another two sets of Regulations, namely the **General Regulations for University Postgraduate Awards (SD263)** and the **Doctor of Philosophy – Ph.D. – Regulations (SD264)**.

In 2014, the University issued its first set of **Professional Doctorate Regulations (SD265)** which govern this type of doctoral studies. The Admission Regulations had a major review in 2016 after the first publication in 1997. In 2019, the Senate agreed to a number of significant changes to these Regulations, which were eventually carried out by the sections within the Office of the Registrar. A number of changes to the previous General Regulations for University Postgraduate Awards were introduced in academic year 2020/2021.

The University also publishes Regulations which are not directly related to a programme of study. These documents are related to specific areas, such as the conduct of assessment, the handling and proceedings of students involved in disciplinary cases and suitability to practise. The full list of Regulations, Statutes and Bye-laws can be found on the respective **website (SD215)** of the Office of the Registrar, whilst the Policies and Guidelines can be found **here (SD266)**. The website is constantly updated following the approval of new or updated Bye-laws and Regulations.

When major amendments to these Regulations are introduced, the Office of the Registrar ensures their timely dissemination across UM to all parties concerned. Information sessions are normally delivered to academic, managerial and administrative staff to explain in detail the new or updated Regulations. These training sessions are supported by published material available on the University website for reference purposes.

1.10. Policies, procedures and guidelines

Policies, procedures and guidelines exhibit governing principles that mandate or constrain action through institution-wide implementation. They set the course for the foreseeable future and are changed infrequently. Furthermore, they help to ensure the University's mission through uniformity and transparency while mitigating institutional risks. Policies, procedures and guidelines provide guidance, consistency, accountability, efficiency, and clarity on how an organisation operates. In order to assist Faculties, Institutes, Centres and Schools, but also to streamline its own operations, the various offices and directorates within UM's central administration draw up and publish, following Senate approval, several policies, procedures and guidelines on various areas of university life, including the composition and operation of different university structures and bodies, student conduct, assessment, progression, extracurricular activities, teaching methods, mobility, data processing and handling, and dealing with issues such as complaints. These policies, procedures and guidelines are meant to elaborate on, or define more clearly, practices that should be adhered to in accordance with General Regulations and Bye-Laws.

The list of policies for UM staff is linked from the UM staff portal and is available **online (SD379)**. Similarly, the list of policies for UM students is linked from the UM student portal and available **online (SD266)**. At times, these documents are replicated on the website of the relevant policy owner, such as the **Office for Human Resources Management & Development (SD217)**, the **Gender Equality and Sexual Diversity Committee (SD027)**, the **Conferences & Events Unit (SD192)**, the **Library (SD197)**, etc.

1.11. Forms

Forms are used by various offices within UM's central administration to collect the required information from staff and students. Forms are official document templates that UM expects internal and external stakeholders to complete when applying for or requesting a specific task. Some of these forms are in PDF format while others are online. These are available on the website of the particular owner, such as the **Academic Programmes Quality & Resources Unit (APQRU) (SD205)** and the **Office of the Registrar (SD216)**. There are also forms for students which are all collated in one **webpage (SD219)**.

1.12. Standard Operating Procedures

The **Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) (SD220)** are detailed, written instructions about how to perform certain routine or repetitive tasks effectively and safely. These are written in a standard format following a standardised process. Three different categories of SOPs are recognised:

- **Academic:** procedures impacting academic programmes and services to students and which aim to facilitate the academic and professional life at the University
- **Administrative:** procedures describing administrative related facilities and services
- **Technical (lab-related):** procedures describing laboratory-related activities including the operation of equipment and laboratory management procedures.

The management of University SOPs is regulated by **SOP UNI-001 (SD221)**. This SOP describes how to write, approve, issue and assign codes to these documents. Every SOP is identified by a unique code and version number and has an author(s), approver(s) and authoriser(s). SOPs are given a validity period of four years, after which they need to be reviewed and updated if necessary. SOPs that are no longer valid are rendered obsolete.

Due to the very diverse nature of these three categories, each SOP category is administered by a different entity as explained in the figure below. This ensures that the proper support is provided to the author(s) and approver(s) of the SOPs.

A full list of issued SOPs can be found on the University's **SOP portal (SD220)**. SOPs are labelled according to their scope and origin. A search tool at the top of the page facilitates filtering and accessibility.



Standard operating procedures

Enter text to filter procedures

All entities ▾

All categories ▾

Applicable to: All ▾

Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) are detailed, written instructions about how to perform certain tasks effectively and safely. They are essential for communicating to staff and students the agreed, defined methodology which must be followed to ensure consistency in our operations. On this page, you will find the list of SOPs issued by the University of Malta. All SOPs on this webpage are controlled documents implying that they are periodically reviewed and kept up-to-date. The first three letters of the SOP code describe the faculty, institute, centre, school or department name.

For instructions on how to write an SOP, refer to [SOP UNI-001](#).

For information on specific SOP training which may be available, please visit the [HRMD](#) webpage.

If you require more information on SOPs in general or if you require support to write an SOP, send an email to sop.quality@um.edu.mt.

SOP code

SOP title





ANA-001-02

Dissection Hall - Good Laboratory Practices   

ANA-002-02

Dissection Hall - The Embalming Solution   

ANA-003-02

Notification of a Death: Accepting or Rejecting Bequeathals    

ANA-004-02

Plastination    

Latest procedures

MCR-001-01 Handling Course Applications and Fees   

The University uses Agresso, an Administrative Information Management System (AIMS) as a database to manage SOPs. A tailor-made module was created in Agresso to archive all current and expired or obsoleted procedures and to keep a full audit trail of changes made to these documents. This system ensures that SOPs are managed effectively, in line with the requirements of a reliable and efficient quality assurance system. This module on Agresso is interfaced with the SOP portal on the University's website and is programmed such that only valid SOPs are visible and accessible on the website. This ensures that only the latest version is accessible to users and no expired SOPs are available for viewing.

Going forward, the aim is to assist FICS and administrative departments in writing effective and user-friendly SOPs detailing important procedures to promote conformity of good practices, transparency and an overall improved institutional performance.

1.13. Research, knowledge transfer and outreach

Research at the University of Malta aims to assemble a range of expertise across the University's various subject disciplines to distinctly discover and transmit knowledge in a way that contributes to addressing current and future topics and gaps, and to respond to emerging areas of interest. In consistency with its vision and mission, UM seeks to engage in outstanding research that contributes to the existing knowledge and has local, regional and international implication through a quality research output. To foster and sustain its approach of conducting innovative research, UM strives to attract and retain high-calibre academics, and to provide them with support through numerous services including an enhanced research infrastructure, internal and external funding, and clear research policies and guidelines which are promptly disseminated to all academic staff.

- The **Research Support Services Directorate** (RSSD) (**SD275**) and **Project Support Office** (PSO) (**SD276**) provide support to academics to secure external and internal funds for research projects. They are driven by a focus on research excellence and guide the University's academics to submit proposals for competitive research funds.
- The **Knowledge Transfer Office** (KTO) (**SD254**) is responsible primarily for supporting commercialisation of technologies originating from the University, as well as research collaborations and student placements with industry, governmental bodies, and NGOs. The Office also works closely with the Malta University Innovation Portfolio Ltd (MUIP) to support spin-outs from the University.
- The **Research Innovation & Development Trust** (RIDT) (**SD193**) has been successful in attracting funds from businesses and non-governmental organisations, raising over €3 million since its inception. The largest share of the funds has, to date, been invested in medical research.

	No. of active projects under management at end of year	Research funds under management at end of year	No. of new projects awarded during year	Research funds awarded on new projects during year
2019 – 2020	302	€37.2 million	137	€13.5 million
2020 – 2021	341	€49.7 million	160	€20.8 million
2021 – 2022	377	€43.5 million	208	€19.4 million

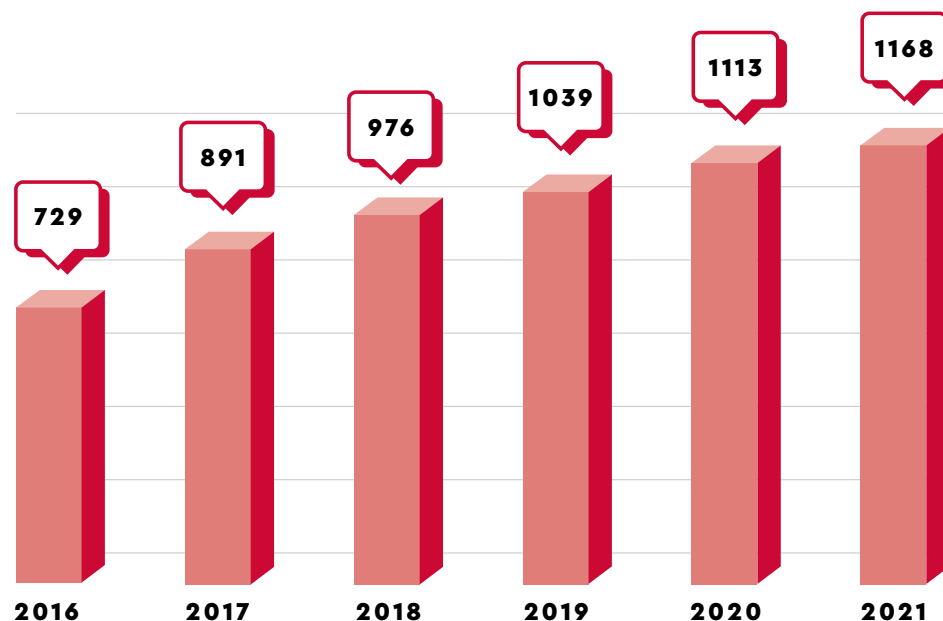
Research funds and projects over a three-year period

Publications by UM academics and researchers have been on a consistent increase since 2016 as indexed by Scopus and Web of Science.

The newly set up Doctoral School plays a pivotal role in supporting doctoral candidates and their supervisors who are dynamic actors in the research ecosystem. The conduct of research at UM is governed by the highest standards of integrity and professionalism overseen by the University Research Ethics Committee (UREC).

In line with its Strategic Plan 2020–2025, the University is constantly increasing its visibility and outreach and consolidating its position as a proactive pillar in Malta's economic development and in the provision of knowledge to its research stakeholders, including the Government, industry and society. UM is continuously striving to consolidate public exposure through traditional and new media to better serve its wider community and stakeholders. In this vein, the University continues to embrace Open Science practices and principles as exemplified by the **Open Access Policy (SD283)** for UM and its Open Access Institutional Repository (**OAR@UM**) (**SD284**).

NUMBER OF PUBLICATIONS BY UM ACADEMICS & RESEARCHERS



1.14. Conclusion

Since the 2015 audit the University has taken a number of steps to strengthen its internal quality assurance arrangements. This included the revival of a Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) in 2015, and the appointment of a Pro-Rector for International Development & Quality Assurance in 2017. In 2021 a new Pro-Rector for International Development & Quality Assurance was appointed as well as a new Senior Executive at the Quality Support Unit (QSU). Since then, the University has been working on developing a comprehensive quality assurance framework which was approved by the Senate on 10 March 2022. More recently, on 30 September 2021, the first Rector's Delegate for Quality Assurance was appointed, whose primary role is to help support the development of a quality culture and help bring closer the academic and administrative aspects of managing quality. The QSU was further strengthened by engaging a Quality Coordinator in November 2022. All of this as well as other work indicates a desire and willingness to implement a comprehensive and robust quality assurance system to support good student outcomes.

In this way, UM managed to establish a robust approach to quality assurance that is clearly communicated to all stakeholders and which governs the University's practices. UM's comprehensive quality management system integrates seamlessly into the total institutional

operation at 360° to include both the academic and operational processes. These activities prove to be vital for the regular planning, implementing and review that bring about continuous enhancements. This quality culture of regular evaluation involving internal and external stakeholders and sustained enhancement guides the University's practices and processes across its various entities. Consequently, UM is confident that it meets the requirements of this Standard.

Proposals for further development

The University of Malta has endeavoured, since its inception, to safeguard high quality in its programmes and operations. The University continuously examines ways to enhance the quality of higher education while simultaneously catering for an increasingly diverse and numerous student body. Concerted efforts have been ever evolving to continuously permeate a culture of quality. It has just recently aligned quality assurance mechanisms which were being implemented, into a comprehensive framework. A way forward is to sustain and strengthen these processes that would assist the University of Malta to fulfil effective internal quality assurance systems and structures that would further increase its high level of local and international trust.

The University of Malta is committed to further strengthen this area by focusing on celebrating and sharing good practices across the University community. The QAC will modify its annual report so that it will include greater critical reflection on strengths and weaknesses, with the strengths being disseminated. Although this is partly already being implemented through the Quality Mailshot Initiative, UM is cognisant that if this is implemented in isolation, it might not achieve the desired outcome. Therefore the QAC through the QSU will be expanding the quality mailshots to other UM social media to reach a wider audience. Other ideas may be explored, such as liaising with the KSU and having students come up with proposing good practices which they experienced and suggest ways on how best to share. These may complement the good practices identified by the QAC and could be celebrated through an annual seminar.

The QAC evaluated that policies are not following one standard format and this impacts ease of access and traceability, thereby jeopardising high quality. In this regard, a way forward is being proposed so that all policies have a standard format using a standard set of required information. This would ensure consistency across the board and increase clarity, traceability and uniformity of information. This may be successfully achieved if UM were to develop a University Policy on "Policy Development". Moreover, UM is committing itself to ensure that policies, procedures and guidelines are easily accessible to users, and organised in a central repository. The same approach is also being contemplated for forms.

STANDARD 2: INSTITUTIONAL PROBITY

MFHEA EQA 2015 Judgement

UM meets the Standard

MFHEA EQA 2015
Recommendations

- APQRU needs to identify its resource requirements to effectively support the periodic programme review mechanism.
- Faculties and Institutes need to have a senior focal person who oversees the effective implementation of the culture of quality of the UoM.
- UoM needs to strengthen its formal deliberative processes to ensure the effective involvement of all stakeholders.
- UoM needs to have more articulated budget analysis and projections, and a better alignment of budgeting per faculty or institute, according to their needs and developments.
- UoM needs to have a more stable and sustainable financial environment in which to be able to plan its long-term growth.

UM Response (*What policies, procedures, systems are currently in place to meet this Standard*)

2.1. Legal representation

The University of Malta is a body corporate having a distinct legal personality as per Article 72A of the **Education Act**, Cap 327 (**SD018**). The Rector is vested with the legal representation of the University (ibid. Art. 74 (11)) and the Chancellor is responsible to ensure that the University conforms with the law (ibid. Art. 74 (4)).

The Chancellor is appointed by the President of Malta acting in accordance with the advice of the Prime Minister given after consultation with the Leader of the Opposition. The Rector is appointed by the Council as per legislation. (Refer to *Principal and Other Officers*, p. 20 for further information).

2.2. Financial probity

In accordance with the Education Act, the University has appropriate measures and procedures in place to ensure financial probity. The University is in compliance with the requirements to regularly provide audited accounts and submit annual budget plans to the Government in order to obtain the funding required to meet its stipulated goals. Further to this, the **Finance Office (SD160)** has a section dedicated to this specific area including control of such budget. Annual financial reports as well as consolidated financial statements are published on the University's **website (SD222)**. It is pertinent to note that financing and control of the finances of the University is governed by the **Education Act (SD018)**, Cap. 327 Art. 73. The University has no direct control over the Government's annual budgetary allocations.

In order to ensure that internal and external stakeholders are involved in the deliberative process when setting up new programmes of study, the Finance Office compiles detailed costings. This exercise requires consultation with the programme initiators (academic departments) and external stakeholders, when the proposed new offering pertains to a bespoke programme which has been developed following an external request for such service. Apart from academic staff costs, this exercise allows and makes provision for occupancy costs, the purchase of books, equipment and office supplies, marketing expenses, etc. The costings which are submitted together with the Stage 1 proposal not less than 12 months prior to the intended date of commencement of the proposed programme, also make reference to projected revenues (where applicable) and stipulate the number of applicants who would need to enrol in the proposed programme to ensure financial viability. Documentation pertaining to programme proposals which move to the Stage 2 approval stage is referred to the Finance Office for consolidation and confirmation of the costings which would have been calculated at the Stage 1 phase. This procedure, which is outlined in Steps 1 and 9 of the **Overview of the Validation Process (SD223)**, is intended to ensure that programmes which are approved by the Senate are supported by the necessary human and capital resources.

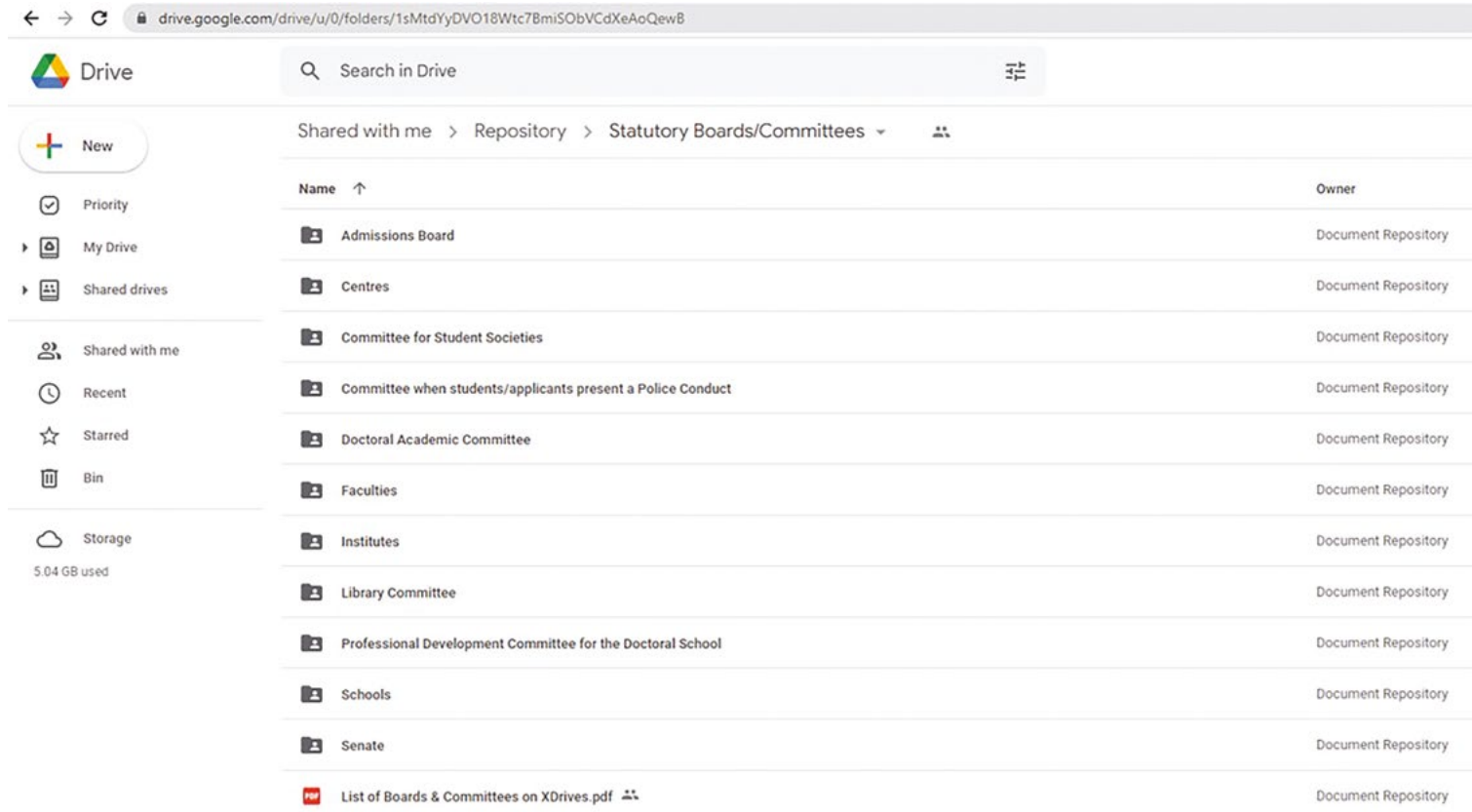
The budget allocation for the day-to-day running of the various units within the University is restricted to approximately three to five per cent of the budget allotted by the Government. Due to this limitation in budgets, annual allocations to the units are quite fixed on a year-to-year basis. However, allocations to different units within FICS and administrative units are discussed with the respective Deans and Directors prior to the distribution of funds.

Furthermore, the Internal Audit Function provides the Council, the Rector and other top management officials of the University of Malta with an objective assessment of the adequacy and effectiveness of the management's internal control systems. To achieve this aim, the IAF conducts internal audit assessments to ensure that the actions of UM's employees and contractors are in compliance with UM's policies, procedures, and applicable laws, regulations, and governance standards. It also evaluates if the results of operations or programs are consistent with established goals and objectives and whether resources and assets are acquired economically, used efficiently, and protected adequately.

2.3. Annual report

The University publishes an annual report on its **website (SD224)**. Besides an institutional annual report and in order to strengthen its formal deliberative processes to ensure the effective involvement of all stakeholders, the University requires each FICS to submit an annual report to the Office of the Secretary. **SOP ZOS-001 (SD225)** was developed to guide FICS accordingly and facilitate their compilation of this annual report.

Moreover, formal deliberative processes take place during meetings at various levels of governance. Meetings are preannounced, involve the respective stakeholders and follow a set agenda which is circulated to all members together with documentation pertaining to the items for discussion, at least five working days prior to the date of the meeting. Minutes of the statutory committee meetings are kept in a central repository.



The screenshot shows a Google Drive interface. The address bar indicates the URL: drive.google.com/drive/u/0/folders/1sMtdYyDVO18Wtc7BmiSOBVCdXeAoQewB. The page title is "Drive". The search bar contains "Search in Drive". The breadcrumb path is "Shared with me > Repository > Statutory Boards/Committees". The main content area displays a list of folders and files, all owned by "Document Repository".

Name	Owner
Admissions Board	Document Repository
Centres	Document Repository
Committee for Student Societies	Document Repository
Committee when students/applicants present a Police Conduct	Document Repository
Doctoral Academic Committee	Document Repository
Faculties	Document Repository
Institutes	Document Repository
Library Committee	Document Repository
Professional Development Committee for the Doctoral School	Document Repository
Schools	Document Repository
Senate	Document Repository
List of Boards & Committees on XDrives.pdf	Document Repository

2.4. Conclusion

Hence, by having appropriate measures and procedures in place to ensure financial probity, and providing regular audited accounts and annual budget plans to the Government, the University is confident that it is compliant with the required rules and regulations. As previously stated, UM publishes its annual financial reports as well as consolidated financial statements on the University's **website (SD222)**. For these reasons, the University meets the requirements of the institutional probity Standard.

Proposals for further development

The University plans to review the annual reporting process so that opportunities for greater efficiency in the process and which would lead to a timelier publication may be identified.

Evaluation of the FICS annual reports submissions over the past three years has identified an inconsistency in the submissions. During academic year 2021/2022, regular reminders were sent to FICS by the Office of the Secretary. The Rector also sent an email to Deans and Directors in this regard. The Quality Support Unit and the Internal Audit Function have collaborated with the Office of the Secretary to ensure that all FICS submit their annual report in a timely manner. These concerted efforts have resulted in a significant increase in the timely submission of annual reports by FICS. The University plans to continue exploring strategies to further improve the timeliness of the submission of these reports.

The University plans to consult and collaborate more closely with Deans and Directors of FICS as well as Directors of key professional and student support services, with respect to planning and budgeting.

STANDARD 3: DESIGN AND APPROVAL OF PROGRAMMES

MFHEA EQA 2015 Judgement

UM meets the Standard

**MFHEA EQA 2015
Recommendations**

- UoM needs to ensure that APQRU can cope with the number of new programmes and programme modifications it needs to support and validate.
- UoM needs to design and update a comprehensive table which provides an overview of all programmes with their status of approval or review.
- The descriptions of all study-units need to contain all the necessary information, especially with regard to learning outcomes, the assessment criteria, the chosen methods of assessment and the methods of teaching and learning.
- A programme proposal review should include more than one external expert. It should include more explicitly the viability of the programme as well as the teaching, learning support and assessment methods utilised.
- The input of future employers and other stakeholders needs to be taken into consideration in a systematic way via polls or interviews, and should be included in the formal proposal form.
- The workload calculation formula needs to be refined in order to stimulate the development and use of innovative and more self-study-based teaching methods.
- UoM needs to regularly assess the real workload of students in relation to the study performance, as well as the academic effort of staff.

UM Response (What policies, procedures, systems are currently in place to meet this Standard)

The University of Malta (UM) invests in a process of design and approval of programmes which is robust in its aims and successfully followed in practice. UM is cognisant that its self-accrediting status, stipulated by **Subsidiary Legislation 607.03 (SD210)**, brings with it the responsibility to ensure that the quality and standards of all its programmes are on par with those of our European and international

counterparts and consistently meet the requirements of IQA Standard 3 as established by the MFHEA and in line with the Malta Qualifications Framework (MQF) as exhibited in the latest edition of the **Referencing Report (NCFHE, 2016) (SD364)**. The University has a comprehensive approach to the design and approval of programmes as detailed in the following sections, which reveal the high-quality standards through a rigorous institutional approval process complemented by internal and external stakeholder feedback.

3.1 Design and approval process

The University is committed to ensure that its programme design and approval process adheres to the following characteristics as outlined in IQA Standard 3 established by the MFHEA, so that each programme:

3.1.1. defines the expected student workload in terms of ECTS or ECVET learning credits

All programmes* are in line with the requirements established in the latest edition of the **Referencing Report (NCFHE, 2016 p.56) (SD364)**.

MQF level	Number of ECTS	Duration of programme in full-time study**
5	30-32 (Certificate)	1 semester of full-time study or the equivalent in part-time
5	60 (Diploma)	2 semesters of full-time study or the equivalent in part-time
5	90 / 120 (Higher Diploma)	3 / 4 semesters of full-time study
6	180 / 240	6 / 8 semesters of full-time study
7	90 / 120	3 / 4 semesters with some Master programmes having exit points at Postgraduate Certificate (30 ECTS) or Postgraduate Diploma (60 ECTS)
8	N/A (Ph.D.)	3 years
8	180 (Professional Doctorate)	3 years

* This does not include the Medicine & Surgery and Dental Surgery programmes at MQF Level 7 as these include a number of placement hours which are required as part of their specialist training.

** When offered on a part-time basis, the time spent in part-time study shall normally count as half that required in the case of full-time studies.

The student workload in terms of ECTS for each programme is accessible to the public through the **UM Course Finder (SD003)** as well as in the prospectus which is also available in print. Each programme's information includes a detailed breakdown of the full programme of study and is available online.

3.1.2. indicates the target audience and the minimum eligibility and selection criteria, where applicable

The information available on the **UM Course Finder (SD003)** includes the target audience, specific entry requirements as well as career opportunities and access to further studies. The information about programmes which is exhibited through the Course Finder is monitored by the Academic Programmes Quality & Resources Unit (APQRU) through a copy editor that helps with the task of streamlining information arriving from different Faculties, Institutes, Centres and Schools (FICS), thereby ensuring consistency in published information. This information is also available in the **undergraduate (SD250)** and **postgraduate (SD251)** prospectus which are both published online and in print.

3.1.3. is learning outcomes-based, distinguishing between knowledge, skills and competences

All programmes at UM are designed through a learning outcomes approach that distinguishes between knowledge, skills and competences. Programme initiators determine the learning outcomes which need to be pitched at the appropriate level of study, as well as how these will be assessed. This is at the heart of the design and approval process explained in 3.1.11.

Lecturers and programme coordinators are guided through general information which is available **online (SD227)**, through a **programme development checklist (SD223)** and through professional development organised by the **Office for Professional Academic Development (OPAD) (SD229)**.

3.1.4. indicates appropriate learning dynamics and a measure of tutor-learner interaction as is appropriate for the programme level and content

UM regards itself as the premier learning hub for the Maltese society where students are empowered to further develop their knowledge, skills and competences reflecting the **UM Strategic Plan (SD005)**. Therefore, an integral aspect of the design and approval process calls for the programme initiators to provide details about the pedagogy and learning dynamics that will be used for each study-unit making up the programme.

UM follows the **Referencing Report (2016, pp.54–64) (SD364)** in terms of the measure of tutor-learner interaction, self-study and other forms of independent learning, and assessment hours as appropriate for the programme level and content. Lecturers and programme coordinators are guided based on the reasoning that at a higher level, learners are expected to have a higher ability to learn independently resonating with the Referencing Report (2016).

3.1.5. indicates appropriate resources and forms of assessment

UM's programme design and approval process takes into consideration information regarding appropriate resources for the programme, financial viability and also forms of assessment. This is evident in the **programme development checklist (SD223)**,

Stage 1 Proposal Form (SD230), **Stage 2 Proposal Form (SD231)** and the **Study-Unit Approval Form (SD232)**.

UM considers learning and teaching as fundamentally associated with continuous, formative and summative assessments. The emphasis on formal examinations is gradually shifting to other forms of assessment that are more specific, and which determine more accurate levels of knowledge and competences. UM is committed to and actively encourages different modes of assessment that address learners' diversity. Lecturers and programme coordinators are provided with guidance **online (SD214)** and through professional development organised by the **Office for Professional Academic Development (OPAD) (SD229)**.

3.1.6. indicates the minimum requirements in terms of qualifications and competences for teaching staff

At proposal stage, all proposers are required to include details of staff who will be involved in the delivery of the programme. As part of the due diligence in the approval process, the Programme Validation Committee (PVC) is guided by the contents of NCFHE (MFHEA) Circular Communication n. 23/2014 issued on 15 October 2014 pertaining to the *Qualification Level for Tutors*.

3.1.7. indicates the programme co-ordinator responsible for:

- I. programme design and content development
- II. technical and media support
- III. teaching programme and interacting and supporting learners.

In October 2016, the Senate approved that programme coordinators should be identified for all programmes of study. The responsibilities associated with this role were also approved by the Senate at the same meeting **(SD355)** and also include the responsibility for ensuring that all study-units within a programme contain all the necessary information with regard to learning outcomes, methods of learning, teaching and assessments and readings. The names of the programme coordinators are included in the information available on the **UM Course Finder (SD003)**.

3.1.8. is in line with the MQF and the Referencing Report (2016) and subsequent updates

All programmes at UM follow the requirements as per latest edition of the Referencing Report (MFHEA, 2016) and are compliant with the MQF. All programmes are evaluated by the **Programme Validation Committee (PVC) (SD204)** and approved by the Senate to ensure that programmes are pegged at the correct level by verifying the learning outcomes. The level descriptors in the Referencing Report (2016) are used as a reference point.

3.1.9. involves stakeholders from the world of work in its design and review

Following from the 2015 EQA audit, the University Senate sought to revise the General Regulations to provide for the involvement of stakeholders in Boards of Studies, where this is deemed salutary to the process by the respective FICS Boards (Reg. 30(3) of the

University General Regulations for Undergraduate Awards (SD234). In addition, as indicated in the **programme development checklist (SD223)** for programme developers, the proposers need to indicate whether the programme is responsive to market needs.

Students are the primary internal stakeholders at UM and therefore the students' voice is captured at different stages and levels of the design and approval process. New programme proposals need to go through the FICS Board, the Programme Validation Committee and the Senate.

- A FICS Board includes two students elected by and from among the students of the FICS as per the Education Act, Cap. 327 (Art. 80 [e]). Bye-laws are also made by the FICS Board and provide for matters of an academic nature and bind the FICS represented by the FICS Board that made those Bye-laws.
- The **Programme Validation Committee (PVC) (SD204)** includes one Senate student representative and one *Kunsill Studenti Universitarji* (KSU) representative or an Alternative Student Representative from KSU. The Alternative Student Representative should fill in for the Senate student representative when they are unable to attend the meeting.
- The **Senate (SD236)** includes four members elected by and from among the University students and two representatives appointed by the Minister from among graduates of the University as per the **Education Act, Cap. 327 (SD018)** (Art. 78 [e], [f]).

Furthermore, student representatives are also elected on the FICS' Board of Studies where programme reviews are discussed and analysed. Student representatives are also integral members of the **Quality Assurance Committee (SD061)** and have a critical role in the Periodic Programme Review process as part of the **Internal Quality Review panel (SD237)**, as members of the **Periodic Programme Review Committee (SD238)** and the **Stakeholders' Committee (SD239)**. Consequently, students have the opportunity to voice their concerns and discuss any issues pertaining to their peers at different stages of the design, approval and review of programmes.

3.1.10. is designed so that it enables smooth student progression;

When reviewing programmes of study, the PVC adheres to the principles as stipulated in Reg. 5(2) of the **University General Regulations for Undergraduate Awards (SD234)**, to ensure that the students' workload is distributed evenly over the academic year and that the size of the individual study-units allows students to take re-assessments or to proceed conditionally to the next year of the programme, in line with the provisions of Regs. 57–60 of the same Regulations. Furthermore, programmes of study need to be compliant with the maximum number of credits of full-time study per academic year as established in the **Referencing Report (2016) (SD364)**, which principles are also reflected in the General Regulations of the University.

3.1.11. is subject to a formal institutional approval process;

All new and revised programmes are subject to a formal institutional approval process. The design, development and approval process outlined below includes: (a) New programmes and (b) Revision of existing programmes.

3.1.11.a. New programmes

All **new programmes** offered by the University are subject to a two-stage validation process established by the Senate. This aims to ensure that approved programmes are in line with the University's vision, strategy and resource possibilities.

The **first stage** of programme approval concentrates on the aims of the programme and the rationale for its need, and is aimed at avoiding duplication of effort, ensuring that the intended learning outcomes are clear and achievable, and that resources are available to allow delivery of the programme to an acceptable standard. The involvement of stakeholders is encouraged at this stage, with a view to promoting programmes which are responsive to emerging social needs or market demands.

Prior to being submitted to the Programme Validation Committee (PVC) for consideration, Stage 1 Proposals need to be endorsed by the Board of the Faculty, Institute, Centre or School (FICS) proposing the new programme. Proposals which are not endorsed by the Board of the FICS are also to be submitted to the PVC accompanied by a report indicating the reasons why the proposal was not endorsed. Following consideration of a proposal by the PVC, the proposal is either recommended for first stage or 'in-principle' approval by the Senate, or is referred back to the Board of the FICS with a request for clarification or revisions, and a deadline for resubmission. When the rationale for the introduction of a new programme is not considered valid, the PVC may also submit a negative recommendation to the Senate accompanied by the justification for refusal of the proposal.

Once a proposal is given first stage or 'in-principle' approval by the Senate, the APQRU liaises with the programme originators and officers in charge of FICS with regard to the submission of the **Stage 2** documentation. At this stage of the approval process, proposers are expected to focus on the details of the learning and teaching methods as well as the assessment techniques to be adopted in delivering the programme. Stage 2 Proposals and documentation are normally submitted at least eight clear months from the proposed date of commencement of the programme (by the end of January for programmes commencing in October, by the end of May for programmes commencing in February). The documentation which needs to be submitted to the PVC for consideration through the Board of the FICS includes:

- Stage 2 Proposal Form
- Study-Unit Approval Forms for all new study-units listed in the programme*
- Bye-laws for the proposed programme (if not already covered by existing bye-laws)

* *Study-units that involve blended or online learning must be accompanied by the relevant checklists (duly completed), as detailed in Appendix B and Appendix C to the **Distance & E-Learning Policy (SD240)**.*

Following internal review of Stage 2 Proposals, the PVC refers the programme documentation to an independent external reviewer for evaluation. The external reviewer is required to evaluate the programme content and provide comprehensive feedback on various aspects of the proposed programme such as the programme description/goals, the rationale for the proposed programme, the study-unit descriptions, the intended learning outcomes, the sequence of the content, the reading lists provided and the proposed teaching and assessment methods. An anonymised copy of the report submitted by the external reviewer is subsequently forwarded to the proposers for tweaking of the programme and/or documentation as necessary.

The University of Malta ensures consistent implementation and design through a transparent process which is available **online (SD223)** and the use of standard forms/templates such as the **Stage 1 Proposal Form (SD230)**, **Stage 2 Proposal Form (SD231)** and the **Study-Unit Approval Form (SD232)**.

3.1.11.b. Existing programmes

Existing programmes which undergo substantial revision are also subject to review and validation. Whilst there is no need for revised programmes to go through the formal two-stage approval process, Boards of Studies are required to provide a clear rationale for the restructuring of the programme together with revised learning outcomes and evidence of stakeholder involvement in the formulation of the revised programme, where such involvement is salutary to the process. As from December 2023, these requests will need to be accompanied by the Annual Programme Review form. This is being done so that programme enhancement is strongly linked to evaluation and internal and external stakeholder feedback.

3.1.12. is subject to annual and periodic programme review.

All programmes are subject to annual and periodic programme review as per IQA Standard 10.

3.2. The Programme Validation Committee

The validation of new and revised programmes falls under the responsibility of the **Programme Validation Committee (PVC) (SD204)**, which was set up as a sub-committee of the Senate in 2007. The Pro-Rector for Academic Affairs normally chairs the fortnightly meetings which include the participation of six senior academics hailing from different FICS, the University Registrar, the Director of Finance, and a student representative. It is given technical and administrative assistance by the **Academic Programmes Quality & Resources Unit (APQRU) (SD205)**. The PVC is responsible for evaluating the documentation submitted at both stages of approval and for recommending decisions for Senate approval or otherwise.

3.3. Conclusion

Based on all the previously explained procedures and measures related to design and approval of programmes at UM, it is evident that the University has established and successfully implemented robust processes that formulate a comprehensive approach to programme design and approval. The involvement of internal and external stakeholders in the process including student representatives, the availability of 'checks and balances' at the various stages of programme design and approval and regular programme reviews through annual and periodic programme reviews guarantee that the University's programmes are quality assured and meet European and international standards. Consequently, UM is confident that its existing processes for the design and approval of programmes adhere to the requirements and expectations of this Standard. With the regular self-evaluation of its policies and practices and the resulting improvement plans, UM will continue to enhance its best practices and consistently seek further improvement.

Planning future improvements

As part of the programme design and approval process, UM will develop a mapping document which details how the learning outcomes for the study-units included in the programme fit within the overall aims and objectives of the programme, and how the proposed assessment methods are being mapped to the indicated learning outcomes.

Moreover, the design and approval process can be further strengthened by providing academics with training related to the undertaking of market studies as this would help ascertain the feasibility and sustainability of programmes by providing valuable insights on the future demand for study places and/or the labour market and/or community needs.

STANDARD 4: STUDENT-CENTRED LEARNING, TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT

MFHEA EQA 2015 Judgement

UM meets the Standard

MFHEA EQA 2015
Recommendations

- UoM needs to develop a consistent policy and process for the provision of feedback on assessment for all students.
- UoM needs to develop a consistent policy and process for the provision of assessment criteria for each assessment task.
- UoM needs to develop a consistent policy for the use of Turnitin software.

UM Response (*What policies, procedures, systems are currently in place to meet this Standard*)

The University of Malta (UM) is committed to student-centred methods and practices in its educational approaches and mission. The interests of students, and therefore their voice and that of their representatives, are considered to be of prime importance. To this end, at an organisational level, students are considered to be an integral part of practically all boards and committees of the University. This ensures that students are part of policy-making and decision-taking at all levels of the University's administrative structure.

UM has well-established mechanisms in place to support students with diverse needs and positively welcomes students with different abilities and ways of learning. We are committed to making the necessary changes to ensure that an equitable environment is created, while celebrating diversity, promoting inclusion and protecting the human rights of all individuals working or studying within this entity. Formal support is tendered both in the long term as well as in an *ad hoc* manner, often urgently and on a temporary basis. Such quickly needed support can be both formal and informal and would typically include asynchronous learning/teaching experiences, one-to-one advice and pastoral support. To uphold this aim the University has a **Gender+ Equity Plan for 2022-2025 (SD304)** and is devoted to developing and promoting these values to students and staff. The primary aim of the Plan is to address any structural and cultural barriers to inclusion at the University.

When permanent support is deemed necessary on the basis of an independent professional assessment, students and entities involved in the learning process are advised and supported by the **ACCESS – Disability Support Unit (SD241)**. Lecturing and other teaching practices are adapted to accommodate specific needs of students who have an impairment, illness or specific learning difficulty. This ensures inclusion and equity according to clearly defined needs. The Unit's website also contains clear information about practical modalities of support aimed at academic and administrative staff.

Teaching methods are regularly reviewed through the statutory requirement of Periodic Programme Reviews. The inputs into such a review are various and typically include feedback from students, teachers' response to student feedback, reactions to new trends in discipline-related research, reactions to external examiners' reports and other external stakeholders. The findings emerging from the Periodic Programme Review are compiled in a **report (SD358)** which would include commendations and recommendations. The recommendations are translated into an action plan by FICS. Both the report and the action plan are submitted to the Pro-Rector for Quality Assurance and the Pro-Rector for Academic Affairs for their consideration and then presented to the Senate.

Student-centred support at UM is also tendered via formal procedures regarding fitness to study, train and practise. The Fitness to Practise Policy outlines general principles for the provision of support to all students following programmes of study at UM. It also sets out protocols and administrative procedures for investigating allegations or concerns about fitness to study, train and practise. The need for a formal policy stemmed from the University's responsibility towards the public, as well as the concern for the welfare of all its students and staff. The University has the responsibility to ensure that students are not only academically competent, but also that those who successfully complete professional programmes are fit to practise within their chosen profession at the start of their career and in compliance with the respective statutory body regulating their profession. The **Fitness to Practise Policy (SD242)** was approved by the Senate at its meeting in May 2021.

Moreover, lecturers are consistently encouraged to plan learning and teaching that provides different ways of representing content knowledge, different means of engagement as well as to provide different modes of assessment. This is crucial at the planning and design stage and is reinforced through the programme and **study-unit approval process (SD227)** (see Standard 3) and further evidenced in the study-unit approval forms which also provide guidance on different **forms (SD226)** that the study-unit can take and in relation to **assessment practices (SD214)**.

UM encourages reflective teaching and peer-to-peer observation among its teaching staff. This fruitful practice has been endorsed by the Quality Support Unit and shared as an example of good practice through the Quality Mailshot Initiative. Furthermore, the Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) promotes a student-centred learning environment by fostering discussions and professional dialogue on quality learning, teaching and assessment as part of the PPR process (**Peer-to-Peer Observation and Reflection mailshot (SD255)**). Good practices that promote **learner autonomy and active learning (SD331)** are also identified and shared through the Quality Mailshot Initiative.

4.1. The COVID-19 pandemic and students at the University of Malta

The COVID-19 pandemic affected the University of Malta directly, indirectly and at all levels. The policies, procedures and systems that were in place at UM to safeguard and protect students were tested to their limits by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The overall aim of the University's administration was not only to mitigate the immediate effects of the pandemic on the student body but also to achieve resilience in the aftermath of the pandemic.

The pandemic was also viewed as a learning experience leading to re-evaluation of structures and processes, consolidation when this was appropriate and change when the need for the latter was clear. An Emergency Situation Team was set up by the Rector in order to review the rapidly changing situation and to issue advice as required. The Team could be contacted on emergencysituation@um.edu.mt. The first of a series of regular advisory messages to students was sent on the afternoon of 25 February 2020.

At UM, all key areas of educational activity including research were negatively affected by rapidly changing scenarios. These were in turn influenced by statutory public health demands, commensurate administrative responses, as well as the understanding, and compliance, to varying degrees, by students and staff. The University had to deal quickly with both predictable and random changes. Those students who were more comfortable dealing with change, fared better. Those students who disliked moves away from the traditional, and from comfort zones, fared worse, and at times at the cost of their psychological integrity.

Support for students was at the forefront of UM's activities and this in the main took the form of academic support and pastoral care. In certain instances, support was tailored to individual needs and at times took the form of material support, including financial backup when appropriate as well as psychological and psychiatric support for the more vulnerable students. Support was in the main coordinated and tendered by the UM Health & Wellness Centre.

Students were supported materially when this was deemed necessary, and in addition to the University's Student Solidarity Fund an *ad hoc* fund was set up in order to give material support (in the form of funds, payment of utility bills and support with day-to-day needs) to students whose personal and/or family life was severely affected by the pandemic.

In terms of actual learning and teaching, there was a necessary rapid change in outlook and practice both with regard to novel and varied modalities of delivery of educational material and also with regard to the necessary switch to online assessment. In early March 2020 the University's IT Services launched special briefing sessions regarding online teaching directed both to the student population as well as to academic and administrative staff. Support and advice to students and staff was ongoing until the end of the examination session in early July 2020. Moreover, UM enhanced the availability of, and the **documentation (SD300)** on, **Panopto (SD288)**, which is a lecture recording software, and **Zoom (SD289)**, which is used for synchronous online lectures, viva-voce examinations and administrative meetings.

The University purchased a digital examination/assessment platform (**WISEflow (SD243)**) and embarked on an intensive programme aiming to familiarise students and staff with the online assessment system.

Students (as well as academic and administrative staff separately) were invited to respond to an online survey (distributed through the official UM electronic mail between 6 and 20 July 2020). Feedback was gathered in order to rapidly acquire an overview into the initial impact of the pandemic. This allowed the University to review policies and processes before the September 2020 examination session and the 2020/2021 academic year.

4.2. Feedback from students

The University aims to offer the best possible environment and learning experience to encourage students to perform at their full potential. Students play a critical role in the evaluation, development and enhancement of the quality of this learning experience. Feedback from students allows the University to evaluate how its service provision is viewed by its most important group of stakeholders, namely its students. Besides providing students with an opportunity to comment on the quality of the learning and teaching environment at the University, feedback ensures that academic members of staff and Boards of Studies are made aware of problems perceived or encountered by students, and provides an opportunity for the conduct of self-evaluation and revision, where necessary.

The outcomes/results of the institutional study-unit feedback are presented to the Dean, Head of Department and academic members of staff and when areas for improvement are identified the academic member of staff concerned is asked to indicate the actions to be taken. Whilst every suggestion is valuable, the importance of statistical significance cannot be overlooked. It is for this reason that all the students within a cohort are strongly encouraged to submit their feedback. The chief concern of UM in this regard is the consistently low response rates, despite involving the University's students' union, streamlining the questionnaire format and widespread advertising. It is understood that this phenomenon of low response rates runs across a large number of higher educational institutions. This is an area where UM is consistently working upon in collaboration with the KSU and student societies and to support this aim UM will be launching a Student Feedback Policy.

The institutional study-unit feedback survey is conducted twice a year through a questionnaire which consists of 17 close-ended questions and a free-text section which allows the students to submit any further comments. Submission of feedback can be done either before or after the assessments are held via the My UM app or the students' portal.

Feedback is collected also at FICS level and is typically run as personal initiatives of individual lecturers, programme coordinators and departments or at times at FICS level. The principle of such surveys is similar; however, they usually differ in the type of responses requested in that they are usually topic-specific. Most of these surveys are professionally designed, anonymous and well-run. The response rate to these surveys is usually much higher than the centrally-run ones as students typically identify more with their own programmes of study than with the University as a body. A significant number of results from such 'local' surveys are made available centrally, at times routinely and at times sporadically and upon request. In support to further encourage student feedback, the QAC has presented a Student Feedback Policy during the Senate meeting of 26 January 2023.

4.3. The examination/assessment system

The set of rules and regulations addressing the UM summative assessment system are designed not only to allow for fairness and transparency but also to protect students against arbitrary decisions and to ensure a robust, reproducible and valid process. A system of appeals in the form of requests for revisions and reconsiderations of examined material is in place. Final examinations leading to the award of degrees invariably include the input of external examiners according to established protocols. The engagement of external examiners is governed through the **Visiting Lecturers and External Examiners Committee (VLEEC) (SD047)**, on the basis of **SOP XRE-001 (SD245)**.

The reports of external examiners are in turn reviewed for comprehensiveness, quality and utility of the remarks tendered. The assessment of the reports themselves is treated in the manner and with the thoroughness of research projects. The reports are sent directly by the external examiner to the Rector, and they are then relayed to the Chair of the Visiting Lecturers and External Examiners Committee (VLEEC) who is also the Pro-Rector for Academic Affairs. They are received and graded against a validated template approved by the Senate. The reports are then forwarded to the Deans of the respective Faculties (or Directors of Institutes, Centres or Schools), often with comments from the Pro-Rector and occasionally a request is made for a meeting with the Dean and/or Head of Department. The reports are also concurrently sent to Faculty Managers. A **report (SD359)** on UM's Visiting Examiners containing statistical data and excerpts from individual reports is drawn up at the end of each academic year and presented to the Senate for information and feedback.

Moreover, there are sub-committees of the Senate for all decisions related to assessment and student outcomes, including assessment appeals, assessment disciplinary cases, fitness to practise and absence from assessment, all of which support consistency of assessment decisions across UM. To further strengthen quality assessment practices that are consistent and fair, the QAC has presented a comprehensive Assessment Policy during the Senate meeting of 26 January 2023.

4.4. Particular areas of support to students

A student-focused Help Hub was inaugurated in May 2022 with the specific aim of providing services through an easily accessible space providing comprehensive information and the necessary assistance and guidance to all students about life on campus. The information available includes matters relating to student wellbeing, admission, tuition and enrolment fees, stipends, student accommodation, exchange programmes, access arrangements, certification, etc.

4.5. Conclusion

Although the student-centred learning concept revolves around putting the students in the focus, this does not imply minimising the focus from the role of the teacher. More importantly, UM acknowledges an emphasis on creating an environment that provides opportunities for learning where students actively interact with what is provided to trigger, enhance and support their own learning.

UM's commitment to a student-centred learning environment may be evidenced by the involvement and representation of students in various levels of governance, therefore placing students as equal partners (see Standard 1). Similarly, the involvement of students in QA mechanisms at every level:

- Design and approval of programmes (See Standard 3)
- Annual Programme Reviews, where the template exhibits the students' voice and the closing of the feedback cycle (see Standard 10)
- Periodic Programme Reviews (see Standard 10)

Nonetheless, UM acknowledges the need for the continuous development of the concept of student-centred learning and its commitment through constant evaluation, consultation with students, regular support and professional development for teachers.

The Academic Programmes Quality & Resources Unit (APQRU) provides resources to support the assessment process at the University. The principles, purposes and processes of assessment are set out as well as types of assessment and resources for teaching staff when designing assessment. The University recognises that effective assessment processes are central to its vision of a holistic quality assurance system and is currently in the process of reviewing and revising its assessment policy. The document includes a statement on the importance of fairness in the assessment process with students given the opportunity to demonstrate learning through varied modes of assessment and provides a comprehensive list of assessment methods that academic staff can use. This document also puts forth the importance of aligning learning outcomes to assessment and the clarity in assessment criteria which may be complemented by rubrics. This approach reflects the commitment in the Learning and Teaching theme of the Strategic Plan for continuous assessment. Furthermore, the University views students' feedback as key in steering continuous enhancement, and is therefore proposing a Student Feedback Policy. The latter, together with the Assessment Policy, will further reinforce the consistent implementation of a student-centred learning environment.

Accordingly, it is evident that UM students have various opportunities and venues to take an active role in creating the learning process and positively participating in university life. UM teaching staff carefully attend to the diversity of students and their needs and they consider a variety of pedagogical methods that cater for the various needs of students and the mixed-ability context. In addition to the continuous guidance and support offered to students, UM encourages a sense of autonomy in its learners and promotes mutual respect within the learner-teacher relationship. Student assessment is compatible with the existing testing and examination methods and there are records of all assessment processes. Feedback on student assessment is given and there are complaints and appeals procedures in place. Thus, the University is confident that it meets the requirements of the student-centred learning, teaching and assessment Standard.

Proposals for further development

The Periodic Programme Review (PPR) process evidences that the University is committed to providing a high-quality learning and teaching higher education experience to all students and various good practices were identified. Moving forward, UM, through the QAC, will explore possibilities where these practices are disseminated and duly celebrated on a regular basis to promulgate and instigate quality practices in learning, teaching and assessment across FICS such as through seminars or webinars.

Following the first cycle of the PPR process, the QAC conducted an evaluation and identified strengths and areas for development. Consequently, during the academic year 2021/2022, the QAC established three working groups made up from administration, academics and students to develop and drive forward three academic policies that aim to promote consistent implementation of quality practices to further address this standard, namely:

- **Assessment Policy Framework** - Given the key role assessment plays, a well-developed and comprehensive assessment policy ensures that academic standards are maintained and learners' performance is evaluated against such standards. This assessment policy, to be implemented across the University, will allow for better quality assurance in the design, approval and periodic review of assessment processes for academic programmes of study at the University of Malta.

This policy goes beyond outlining the practice of assessment and situating assessment in the learning-teaching process. It is guided by a number of ethical, moral, legal, pedagogical, curricular and scientific principles. Effective assessment requires a paradigm shift from focusing solely on assessment *of* learning to the consideration of assessment *for* learning and finally assessment *as* learning. This assessment policy will also document the characteristics of sound assessment including assessment methods. Given the necessity of integrating online learning in tertiary institutions, this assessment policy will consider virtual environments as contexts for assessment.

Recognising the prominent position of assessment in learning and teaching, the University of Malta is committed to its continued pursuit of quality and excellence through the development, implementation and periodic monitoring of this assessment policy that imparts a student-centred learning environment.

It is also pertinent to note that, while the policy is aimed at setting the backdrop to UM's vision as regards assessment, a further accompanying document is also in development. This document will serve as a "toolkit" to assist FICS in putting the policy in practice while portraying a more consistent understanding of a student-centred learning environment.

- **Student Feedback Policy** - The aim of this policy is to define the approach of the University to the systematic collection and analysis of student feedback, how the University and the FICS determine actions to be taken based on student feedback and how the University and the FICS communicate student feedback outcomes to students.

The advanced drafts of the Assessment Policy and the Student Feedback Policy will be presented to the Senate at the end of January 2023. This will be followed by a UM-wide consultation process to gauge feedback and reactions and to increase ownership which will facilitate the eventual implementation process.

- **Policy on the consistent use of Turnitin** – UM aims to promote academic integrity in all disciplines and at all levels as a key value. The aim of this policy is to provide guidance on the use of Turnitin, a software service which compares submitted texts to published material available online as well as to previous student submissions, in order to detect material that is copied in full or in part, and thus assisting the lecturer in identifying plagiarism and/or collusion. Feedback from the Turnitin service should be used to enable students to better understand plagiarism, and hence help prevent it.

The advanced draft of the Policy on the consistent use of Turnitin will be presented to the Senate in March 2023.

STANDARD 5: STUDENT ADMISSION, PROGRESSION, RECOGNITION AND CERTIFICATION

MFHEA EQA 2015 Judgement	UM meets the Standard
<p>MFHEA EQA 2015 Recommendations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UoM needs to install a mechanism of regular feedback from student representatives to measure essential quality aspects of admission, progression, recognition and certification. • UoM needs to assure full consistency and completeness of descriptions of programmes and study-units, especially concerning prerequisites and sequential conditions. • UoM needs to install in all Faculties and Institutes a programme coordinator as a Standard function and/or an academic member of staff to supervise programme quality aspects. • UoM needs to install procedures or mechanisms to automatically collect, monitor and manage information on student progression at institutional level and in all study programmes and Faculties or Departments, so that internal benchmarking can be used. • Further development of transparent and effective procedures to recognize and validate prior learning, for formal achievements and qualifications, as well as for non-formal and informal learning, ensuring equivalency with competences or learning goals of programmes or course units.
<p>UM Response (<i>What policies, procedures, systems are currently in place to meet this Standard</i>)</p>	
<p>Students are at the core of the University of Malta so we take pride in ensuring that students experience a meaningful and supportive university life-cycle. This is implemented consistently and transparently through the Office of the Registrar (SD216) which sees students through enrolment, progression and graduation. Appropriate mechanisms have been established to recognise prior learning and this Office has processes and mechanisms in place to collect, monitor and manage information on student progression. Furthermore, upon successful completion students receive a certification in line with MFHEA regulations and which is complemented by a digital version of the same credentials to graduates.</p>	

5.1. Admission of UM students

5.1.1 Applicants' outreach

UM is committed to providing a high-quality student experience within an academically inspiring and motivating environment, in the knowledge that this will lead to the enhancement of learning and performance of our graduate community. Experience has shown us that students who are provided academic and social support and who are engaged in campus life achieve more in their studies and career.

Webinars (SD246) were conducted in collaboration with the Student Advisory Services (SAS) to facilitate the application process for prospective applicants. Another set of webinars was conducted for foundation students applying for undergraduate degrees. Furthermore, prospective applicants may find helpful advice **online (SD247)** through audio and visual resources such as the **Prospective Applicants Vodcast (SD248)** or through a **booklet (SD249)** that serves as guidance for applicants. UM's **undergraduate prospectus for 2022 and 2023 (SD250)** was officially published in July 2022 while the **postgraduate prospectus for 2021 and 2022 (SD251)** was published in May 2021 with a clear responsiveness to industry demands. The prospectus exhibits clearly and in a transparent manner the entry requirements for each programme of study and is available both in print and online format. It also includes comprehensive information about admission procedures, resources and support services.

It is noteworthy that the Office of the Registrar works in collaboration with the Student Recruitment Office (forming part of the Marketing, Communications & Alumni Office) and regularly provides its expertise in the field of overseas qualifications and other tools, such as access to SIMS and communication portals to help the Student Recruitment Office operate effectively and reach out to a wider range of prospective international applicants. The **Student Recruitment Office (SD375)** organises regular webinars to attract international and local students.

During each academic year, the University of Malta invests a lot of its efforts in order to attract new local and international students to join its programmes. During the past years, the University has been enjoying an increase in the number of accepted postgraduate applicants, whilst during the latest intake, there was a rise in the number of accepted Non-EU/Non-EEA students as a result of various integrated marketing efforts. The University strives to offer a range of different programmes in various areas of academic expertise in order to attract individuals from different sectors of the population with the aim of filling the gaps within the market. One of UM's social responsibilities is to offer programmes of study in line with the needs of the industry and society in general, both on a national and international level. Bridge Education is also an item on the University's agenda especially for areas which are continuously evolving due to the nature of the profession. The University believes that micro-credentials must be given more importance and offer a way forward in the higher education sector. In response to the concept that life-long learning brings with it work-life balance struggles, the University has adopted new modes of teaching such as online classes and blended learning.

To support this approach of life-long learning, the University embarked on the process of offering Continuing Professional Development that has gradually spread among the various FICS over the last few years. Moreover, the Doctoral School launched a Professional Development Programme in 2019 which aims to foster a community of leading researchers, helping them develop a broad range of skills and knowledge

that can be applied across a wide variety of careers within and outside academia. The Centre for the Liberal Arts & Sciences has proven to be a huge success in the implementation of this vision since the number of registered students for these individual study-units (micro-credentials) remained constantly high over the years. In this same vein, seeking to facilitate life-long learning opportunities the University approved a new flexible attendance mode, where students are able to spread the duration of an existing programme workload on more years than the full-time or the traditional part-time routes.

5.1.2 Application form

The Office of the Registrar continuously seeks to improve its application process to make it more user-friendly. Through the years, the technical team responsible for this task has changed the user interface to reflect the new UM branding. The application has also been updated to accommodate web responsiveness in order for the application to be accessed by multiple devices of different screen sizes. All the online application facilities have the convenience of a secure payment gateway facility at the end of the process.

The University of Malta has five entry points in order for applicants to submit their application to join a programme at this tertiary level institution. The majority of students join the University in October, whilst a smaller number of students is normally accepted to commence their studies in February. Applications for doctoral students and Master by Research programmes are also accepted to commence in April, June and December.

The University of Malta has designed different types of online application forms in order to cater for the different needs and requirements of applicants in line with the programme types indicated below:

Programme type	Online application form	Availability
Undergraduate/postgraduate	um.edu.mt/apply	Normally available in December of the previous year
Doctoral programme (MQF level 8)	um.edu.mt/apply	Available all year round
Programme in the Liberal Arts and Sciences *	Link published on um.edu.mt/clas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Semester 1 units – available from August • Semester 2 units – available from November/December
Visiting & auditing students applying for specific study-unit/s offered and advertised by the respective Faculty/Institute/Centre/School *	Link published on the homepage of the respective Faculty/Institute/Centre/School.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Semester 1 units – up to the end of September • Semester 2 units – up to the end of January
Visiting & auditing students interested in following study-units for their personal knowledge or their career advancement *	Link is provided to the applicant by the Office of the Registrar.	Available all year round
Short-course awards	Link is provided to the applicant by the Office of the Registrar.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Semester 1 units – up to the end of September • Semester 2 units – up to the end of January
Erasmus+ exchange (incoming students)	Link is provided to the applicant by the International Office.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Semester 1 units – available from February/March • Semester 2 units – available from October

* Through these online applications, the applicants have the ability to choose the study-unit/s that they wish to follow.

The online application and the admissions process fall under the remit of the Office of the Registrar. All the information submitted by the applicants is stored within the **Student Information Management System (SD294)** also known as **SIMS**. In the past years, the SIMS Office in conjunction with the Admissions & Records Office have transitioned from tedious and time-consuming manual processes into more automated solutions in order to offer a better service to their applicants, e.g. applicants presenting local qualifications are receiving their letter of acceptance within a few weeks from the submission of their application.

The following tasks have brought with them advantages such as a faster response rate and reduction of human errors:

- vetting of the admission applications through the use of automated solutions for applicants presenting both local and overseas qualifications
- applicants submitting applications with overseas qualifications have the ability to upload documents in relation to their application online.

5.1.3. Admissions process

Once an application is submitted through the online application facility, the Admissions & Records Office starts the evaluation process. The applications are divided into two main categories, namely applicants in possession of local qualifications and applicants in possession of foreign qualifications. The application and evaluation process takes place according to the SOP **ZAR-007 (Procedure for the Evaluation of Local Applications) (SD252)** and varies depending on the following factors:

- type of qualifications presented
- programme type applied for as listed in the above table
- Maturity Clause / Recognition of Prior Learning – persons over 23 years of age by 1 October/February (according to the entry point)
- Admissions Board (to discuss special cases in terms of the Admissions Regulations, 2016)

5.1.4. Admissions Board

The University Admissions Board was set up by the Senate to:

- decide on the eligibility of any applicant for admission to any University programme of study as a junior, regular, probationary or provisional student
- decide on who is admitted to a programme to which admission is limited, in accordance with the provisions of the Regulations or Bye-laws for that programme and any other selection criteria approved by the Senate

- seek the advice of a FICS admissions committee on any matter concerning eligibility for admission to a programme of study in that FICS
- advise the Senate on all matters regarding admission to the University and its programmes of study.

Following the vetting of applications submitted, the Assistant Registrar responsible for the admissions process identifies the cases that need to be discussed by the said Board, including but not limited to:

- acceptance in a particular year of a course other than Year 1 – in such cases, the Admissions Board will also approve the transfer/exemption of previously obtained study-units, both from local or foreign institutions
- applicants who fall short of the required qualifications due to a significant disability or via the Recognition of Prior Learning
- applicants who for reasons of residence or education abroad lack the Maltese general entry requirements.

This Board is chaired by the Pro-Rector for Academic Affairs, the Academic Registrar, three appointed members of the academic staff and a student representative.

5.1.5. Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

The **Recognition of Prior Learning** (RPL) (**SD253**) is the process of recognising learning obtained through formal, non-formal and informal learning other than the mainstream certification. Prior learning can also include the acquisition of competences gained through educational institutions such as schools, colleges, workplaces, life and work experiences, or even through personal interests.

Prospective applicants are directed to the Student Advisory Services (SAS) in order to commence the RPL process and identify the learning outcomes achieved through prior certified and experiential learning. Applicants are advised to start this process eight months ahead of the deadline for submission of applications. The University's Policy for the Recognition and Accreditation of Prior Learning (RPL) and Facilitation of Access to University Courses is available **online** (**SD235**).

Interested mature applicants are required to fill in the RPL form found at um.edu.mt/rpl



The applicant is assigned to an RPL coordinator



Student Advisory Services invites applicant to meet the RPL coordinator where the person is briefed on what is expected to be included in their portfolio, depending on the programme they wish to follow



Once sent, the RPL coordinator verifies the document and sends it to the RPL advisor within each FICS



The FICS RPL committee evaluates the portfolio before issuing a recommendation for acceptance or otherwise. The committee might also decide to interview the applicant. The FICS recommendation is sent to the Admission & Records Office (ARO) and the SAS RPL coordinator



In cases where the applicant is not accepted, the SAS RPL coordinator contacts the applicant in order to provide further feedback regarding any missing elements in the portfolio and to bridge the gap of requirements necessary for the programme of their choice

The RPL Policy aims to guide departments in managing the process of recognition and accreditation of prior learning by providing a set of core principles and key features intended to ensure consistency and transparency in the application of the principles of RPL across the University. Applicants are guided to demonstrate how outcomes obtained as a result of prior learning are consistent with the educational requirements or aims of the programme to which the applicant is seeking acceptance and/or exemption. Furthermore, the prior learning presented should be at the appropriate academic level and would need to match the learning outcomes required by the relevant programme.

As part of the European Higher Education Area, UM defines learning in terms of its outcomes in different contexts and for different purposes. Learning outcomes are understood as a common language between education and the world of work.^[1] In this regard, UM ensures that the credit awarded for prior learning is of an equivalent value and level to credit achieved from taught programmes by evaluating the applicants' portfolio vis-à-vis the learning outcomes of the particular programme. The learning outcomes of any programme would have initially been approved by the Programme Validation Committee (PVC) who in turn follows the guidance in the **Referencing Report (2016) (SD364)**.

The statistical information regarding the progression of students who were admitted to the University with the RPL clause in the past six years confirms that the current RPL process is adequate given that the majority of the students manage to follow the programmes successfully as indicated in the tables below.

Academic year	Total no. of accepted students (RPL)
2017/18	6
2018/19	8
2019/20	21
2020/21	19
2021/22	19
2022/23	19
Total	92

Number of RPL admissions 17/18 to 22/23

Total applicants	92
Still current	44
Graduates	23
Withdrawn	25

Progression of RPL admissions

Out of the 25 withdrawn students	Twenty students resigned in the first three months of the course – no assessments submitted
	Two students passed all study-units before resigning
	One student had a mix of Pass and Fails before resigning
	One student passed all study-units before failing the dissertation
	One student failed all results (two study-units) before resigning

Tracking of withdrawals 17/18 to 22/23

5.2. Acceptance and activation of student's UM IT account

Upon acceptance, all University of Malta students are given access to activate their UM IT account. This account gives the students access to various online services including:

- University email address (@um.edu.mt)
- eSIMS – the students' portal
- Virtual Learning Environment (VLE)
- WISEflow (online examinations)
- Library services
- all the services offered by the IT Services.

5.3. UM Freshers' Week and student Help Hub

During the first week of October, a number of meetings are organised by different Offices within the University in order to pass on important information to our freshers in order to help them settle down in a short period of time. Various meetings are held with newly accepted students including:

- meeting with the Registrar (for general information)
- meeting with the Dean/Director of FICS
- meeting with the respective Head of Department
- meeting with the Faculty Managers/Officers in Charge of FICS
- meeting with the Equity Office
- meeting for international students including lecture venue tours around campus
- Library tours
- IT Services tours

The **programme (SD256)** for Freshers' Week and the information given during these meetings is always available online on the respective websites. During this week, various local companies and public entities book a stand on campus where they can market their companies or offer their services to students. Moreover, various UM offices would organise games and competitions in order to attract these freshers during their first days at the University.

Another important step in the development of student services at the University of Malta is the setting up of the **Help Hub (SD201)**. The aim of this service is to have a one-stop-shop for all students, where students can be assisted without them having to visit different offices in order to seek help. A Student Coordinator to operate the Help Hub has been approved and appointed by the Council.

5.4. Students' digital support

In today's digital age, the University strives to offer a number of online facilities in order to provide a more efficient service. With the activation of their UM account, University students can enjoy a wide range of services at their fingertips, 24/7. The technical offices within the University are always in search of adopting new and efficient ways of improving the virtual services offered such as:

- **Email distribution** – In the past years, the University has embraced different technologies to improve its performance.
- **SMS notifications** – Another initiative that was hugely welcomed by UM students is the fact that notifications are being sent in real-time via SMS. Important information is being sent to our students through the use of a task which enables all FICS academic and administrative staff to contact students regarding urgent matters such as when a lecture is postponed.
- **Increase in social media presence** – The implementation of new ideas such as bannered emails, the use of QR codes to view tutorials, as well as visual and graphic reminders on the Office of the Registrar's website are aiding and facilitating communication with students.
- **Student Maintenance Grant web service** – The development of a web service in conjunction with the Student Maintenance Grant Board IT System in order to automate further the process of confirming the students' eligibility for the Student Maintenance Grant was undertaken.
- **Virtual Learning Environment and plagiarism detection tool (Turnitin)** – The VLE also provides the facility to students to upload their work through this software and to check for plagiarism. Students have the possibility to submit their work as a draft following which they are provided with a report highlighting the plagiarised sections together with the percentage of plagiarism. Following this, the student is able to carry out the necessary changes and submit the final version of their work. Examiners have access to the final version of the plagiarism report.
- **System-generated unique identifier code** – Another improvement that was recently launched was the introduction of a unique code for all the dissertations and theses submitted by our students at the end of their studies. This code ensures that the student's identity is not divulged during the examination process. This code is also being used for referencing purposes when storing the students' work within the repository of the UM Library.
- **Gozo Campus** – University students who reside in Gozo have been given the facility to indicate where they would like to sit for their written supervised examinations through the students' portal.
- **Online registration for doctoral workshops** – Doctoral students have the facility to apply for the various doctoral workshops through their eSIMS portal.

When designing new online forms, the University always ensures that the applications are inclusive and support the diversity of our community in terms of variables such as gender, disability or medical conditions and privacy issues that applicants or current students might have. The collection of data and the consequent use and storage is regulated by GDPR legislation. The Office of the Registrar liaises constantly with UM's Data Protection Officer and seeks legal guidance regarding sensitive issues. An Access Arrangements Application Form is available through the students' eSIMS portal where students can apply for their Course and Exam Access Arrangements. With the increase in the use of virtual meetings, the University felt the need to safeguard the privacy of all University stakeholders. One of the improvements that was carried out in relation to e-learning was the supply of UM-branded images that may be used as background features during meetings/lectures.

5.5. Student retention

5.5.1 Follow-up of withdrawn students

The University understands and is aware of the challenge of student retention which affects universities across the globe. Due to this trend, the University of Malta has also teamed up with Malta's Public Employment Service and Jobsplus, in order to follow up these cases over and above the follow-up conducted by the University.

A student's decision to withdraw from studies can be a sign that they are having difficulty in their studies or are dealing with other difficulties that are affecting their ability to achieve. The University of Malta wants to provide its students with the tools and assistance they need to get through these difficulties and possibly re-enrol in the future by keeping in touch with them. This also provides a sense of connection and belonging to the University.

The University does its utmost to reach out to students who are going through any difficulties directly or indirectly related to their studies prior to their resignation from the course. The University of Malta provides various opportunities to ascertain that the students can deal with their issues in the healthiest way possible whilst also achieving their best academic results. During these meetings, various alternatives are explored in order to identify the best possible way forward according to the students' individual needs. These include the possibility of temporarily suspending the studies during a particular period or requesting an extension of studies. In addition to this, whenever deemed relevant, students are encouraged to make use of the services offered by the Health & Wellness Centre and the Office of the Registrar including the Student Advisory Services.

On a weekly basis, the Student Advisory Services reach out to individuals who had withdrawn from their studies in the previous week. This procedure is mainly done to ensure that the drastic decision to withdraw from the course was reached after taking all necessary factors into account. Furthermore, as a University we need to ensure that the student is aware of all the opportunities available should an interest and opportunity arise to study at the University of Malta in the future. During this informal conversation, a number of indirect questions are asked. Data gathered through this telephone conversation is kept confidential and used for internal reference purposes only.

This exercise is also contributing towards having more skilled workers in the employment population. Students are guided and helped to reflect on their various potentials even if it means shifting their studies to different areas.

5.6. Effective tools for administrative staff

The following tasks were designed to facilitate the process of handling data to improve the overall efficiency of services provided to students and aim to facilitate students' life during their higher education journey.

5.6.1. Supervisor details task

An online task that enables FICS users to assign supervisors and co-supervisors to assist students with their dissertation/thesis through eSIMS. The outcome of this task provides the student with direct contact with the assigned supervisor.

5.6.2. Board of Examiners details task

An online task that enables FICS users to input the names of chairpersons/examiners on Boards of Examiners who are assigned to assess the students' dissertations or theses through eSIMS. This task is available for students registered on a number of programmes according to set criteria.

5.6.3. Tips and tricks

Monthly emails are being sent to all users with tips and tricks on the use of SIMS. The aim of these emails is to familiarise users with shortcuts and better use of SIMS so as to provide better services to students. The **Student Life Cycle (SD257)** is an example of the tips and tricks that are frequently shared with users.

5.6.4. Data maintenance

Data maintenance plays a crucial part in sustaining a functioning database. Data cleansing is routinely performed in order to ensure that the data is error-free and up-to-date. This task is taken very seriously in order to provide the most accurate information in the form of statistics and reports. Over the years, a number of data maintenance reports have been designed in order to assist users and enable them to amend any incorrect information. Routine checks are performed regularly by the central administration and the FICS administrative staff in order to ensure that the data is correct and complete.

5.7. The Office of the Registrar and the COVID-19 pandemic

The Education sector has been massively hit worldwide by the COVID-19 pandemic which has caused an unprecedented crisis in the operation of all institutions. In a very short period of time, the University, like many other higher education institutions, had to modify its pedagogic approach by shifting from face-to-face lectures to remote learning.

Prior to the pandemic, the University of Malta exhibited limited exposure to e-learning and distance education. Back in March 2020, the Government ordered the closure of educational institutions whilst encouraging the use of technology in order to migrate from the traditional classroom learning to online digital platforms. During this year, UM had to adapt and implement different strategies in the delivery of lectures and the way that the University operates. In a short period of time, the University managed to invest and implement the WISEflow platform which was of vital importance to the continuation of the day-to-day operations of the University. Such an abrupt shift resulted in additional management challenges which were faced by all the stakeholders of the University including its students, academic staff and administrative staff. In order to help with this sudden and unexpected change, online tutorials were held in order to help the main target groups of the UM community. Rapid adaptation to the new operational methodologies was of vital importance.

This quick response presented challenges for both students and lecturers due to various factors including age, technological background, and experience. Several students even found it challenging due to the lack of tools and space available at their homes. This included the access to stable internet connectivity to follow lectures, adequate computer equipment and quiet space in their homes to be able to follow lectures and undergo examinations. Due to these issues, the University reached an agreement with the Curia Archdiocese of Malta in order to offer alternatives to students who lacked a quiet or adequate space where they could follow the online lectures or sit for their examinations.

In March 2020, the Senate approved that special regulations will be enacted to cater for the deviations of the published University Regulations in response to the emergency situation. A number of new operation methods were introduced with the intention of assisting our students in the continuation of their studies with minimal disruption and to safeguard their wellbeing in general. One of the decisions that was taken was to look into the traditional assessment methods and shift, wherever possible, from an examination to a written assessment such as an assignment or a take-home examination. Such alternative methods still ensured that the required quality standards and rigour are not prejudiced. For online examinations, WISEflow enabled the possibility for lecturers to upload the exam paper which would be accessible only during the duration of the examination. For small groups of students, possible alternative methods of assessment could take the form of *viva-voce* examinations (involving a minimum of two examiners) via Zoom (or other suitable online platforms). Once again, technology proved to be an indispensable solution for this change to take place. During this unprecedented year, students were allowed to progress to the next year of their studies even if they failed in more than 12 ECTS credits, which limit was established by Boards of FICS acting on the advice of Boards of Study. Also, any requests for extension of deadlines for dissertations/theses and/or suspension of studies arising due to problems caused by the COVID-19 pandemic were approved over and above the normal circumstances of those permitted by regulations. UM students who were abroad on Erasmus and other exchange visits and who were not able to complete their studies at the foreign university were allowed to register for UM study-units. The respective lecturers provided assistance to make up for missed lectures. Incoming Erasmus students who returned to their home country were still provided with the same online teaching and support as

for other UM students. The entry requirements for most undergraduate courses commencing in October 2020 were reduced. Applicants were only required to present 36 points within the Matriculation Certificate instead of the normal 44 points. The mix of subjects within the Matriculation Certificate and the Special Course Requirements were also waived during this intake.

The University of Malta sustained Government employees who found themselves unemployed due to the pandemic and offered two postgraduate courses, namely the Master of Arts in International Hospitality & Tourism Experience Management and the Master of Arts in Tourism & Culture.

The efforts invested during the pandemic era are still having a positive effect in the present days. Currently the University is undergoing an infrastructural project in order to enable a wider use of the WISEflow platform on campus. This new way forward is being implemented keeping in mind the advancement and advantages brought forward by the use of Information Technology. The latter has proven to be a key element in the effort to become a more efficient institution for all our stakeholders. Also, the University recognises the positive environmental effect that this change brings with it. The University has also decided to promote a 50–50% in person-remote mode of delivery with the aim of helping part-time students, who have employment and family commitments, to follow and eventually complete their programme with success.

5.8. Students' progression

Student progression is carried out periodically during the year depending on the programme start date and the type of programme that the student is following. At the University of Malta, there are two entry points for undergraduate programmes and five entry points for postgraduate programmes, namely:

- October (Main intake – all programme types)
- December (Postgraduate programmes mainly by Research + Doctoral)
- February (Smaller intake – all programme types)
- April (Postgraduate programmes mainly by Research + Doctoral)
- June (Postgraduate programmes mainly by Research + Doctoral)

The progression process varies according to the programme type that the student is following as indicated below.

5.8.1. Undergraduate progression

The progression of undergraduate students is carried out in the summer months for students who commence their studies in October and in March/April for February students. Following the publication of all study-unit results, the Faculty Manager/Officer in charge of the respective FICS computes the progression decisions for each student according to the provisions laid down in the **General Regulations for University**

Undergraduate Awards, 2019 (SD234). There are refreshable reports which are specifically designed to display the results data from the students' system for the computation of the students' eligibility for progression. These decisions are submitted through a task available on the FICS staff's eSIMS portal and submitted to the central administration for further checking and processing. The decisions submitted by FICS are verified with the SIMS automatically generated progression statuses and students' results which are calculated by the automated progression rules set in place in terms of the said Regulations. Once verified, the record for the new academic year is created. On the first day of the online enrolment period, these students receive an email on their university email account requesting them to enrol for the next academic year.

Furthermore, during the months of July and August, continuing students are required to choose the study-units that they will be following during the following academic year. The registration of study-units is done through an online task on the students' portal, where students have the facility to choose the study-units that they will be following during the following academic year according to the programme of study published on the course finder facility. As from academic year 2022/23, the majority of first-year students were also given the opportunity to register online for their elective, optional, DegreePlus and extra English study-units. This initiative consolidates the University's vision to transfer all of its processes online.

Certain programmes require that students choose particular areas of study before progressing from a year to another. In such cases, these students have the facility to choose their preferred area of study through an eSIMS task designed specifically for the purpose. This exercise is also carried out in August. Following the student's choice, the Faculty Manager/Officer in charge of the respective FICS and the progression team within SIMS Office calculate the eligibility of such students and process their records accordingly. Within a few weeks from choosing their new area/s of study, these students are also required to complete the online registration for study-units that they intend to follow during the following academic year. In the first weeks of October, the students would then be able to enrol for their programme.

5.8.2. Postgraduate progression

The progression of second-cycle programmes is carried out during the summer months for students who commenced their studies in October whilst those who commenced in February are progressed in March/April. The records of students registered for mainly-by-research programmes, commencing in April, June or December are progressed to the following academic year after 12 months following a positive recommendation from their supervisor.

The progression of students following postgraduate programmes is carried out following the publication of results. The Faculty Manager/Officer in charge of the respective FICS calculates the eligibility of such students by referring to the data available on the refreshable reports. Decisions for such students are afterwards submitted through the Student Progression Process task available on the staff's online portal. Once the decisions are submitted to the central administration, the records of the students are verified with the students' results and progressed to the following academic year. On the first day of the online enrolment period, these students receive an email on their University email account requesting them to enrol for the next academic year.

5.8.3. Types of progression status

University students are eligible to progress from a year to another depending on the results obtained. However, students who fall short from obtaining all the required ECTS credits to progress regularly to the subsequent year, have the following options:

Progression status	Programme type	Description
Conditional progression	Undergraduate & postgraduate	Progress conditionally to the following programme year if a student fails in not more than 12 ECTS. During the next academic year, the student is to follow the programme for the current year + the referred incomplete study-units from the previous year.
Extension year	Undergraduate	Remain registered in the same programme year but follows the incomplete study-units (Fail or Absent) only. Assessment opportunities are incremented.
Repeating year	Undergraduate	Repeating the year in its entirety – results for the failed academic year are cancelled.
Additional year	Undergraduate	Changing an area of study with the option of keeping the results of the other successfully completed area.

5.8.4. Progression of doctoral students

Progression of doctoral students is carried out in June of each year. Supervisors are requested to submit a progress report to the Faculty Doctoral Committee with their recommendations. The Doctoral Committee Administrator informs the SIMS Office by filling in the respective progression forms according to the Faculty Doctoral Committee's recommendation. Progression is then carried out in line with the **Doctor of Philosophy Regulations, 2008 (SD264)**. Once the record is updated, the student receives an email asking them to enrol for the next academic year through their eSIMS portal.

5.9. Recognition and certification

The University of Malta offers various types of degrees, diplomas, certificates and awards to its students according to the level of the successfully completed study-units and the respective number of ECTS credits obtained.

University qualifications and awards

According to the General Regulations for University Awards, University qualifications and awards are given to or conferred upon students as follows:

Programme type	Programme level	ECTS credits
Undergraduate	Short Course Awards	Not more than 25
Undergraduate	University Certificate	30/32
Undergraduate	University Diploma	60
Undergraduate	University Higher Diploma	90
Undergraduate	Bachelor	180
Undergraduate	Bachelor (Honours) – Honours in one area of study	180
Undergraduate	Bachelor (Honours) – Honours in one area of study or one area if leading to a warranted profession	240
Undergraduate	Medicine & Surgery/Dental Surgery	300*
Postgraduate	Short Course Awards	Not more than 25
Postgraduate	Postgraduate Certificate	30
Postgraduate	Postgraduate Diploma	60
Postgraduate	Master	90/120/180
Postgraduate	Master of Philosophy	N/A
Postgraduate	Doctor of Philosophy	N/A
Postgraduate	Professional Doctorate	180

* These programmes include a number of placement hours which are required as part of their specialist training.

5.9.1. Graduation ceremonies and certification

The University of Malta holds two sessions of graduation ceremonies per academic year. Undergraduate awards are conferred upon graduands during a session of ceremonies held in November, whilst postgraduate and doctoral awards are conferred during a session held in March. During these ceremonies, all graduates are handed a scroll which is traditionally issued in Latin and includes the University seal. Together with the scroll, the University also offers its graduates the **Europass Diploma Supplement (SD259)** which is provided in English, free of charge to all graduates during such ceremonies. Students may apply **online (SD260)** for a transcript which gives details of the

student's academic record. All official certificates issued by the University of Malta are electronically generated and are issued in line with the respective Regulations in a standard and consistent format. Students who successfully complete a pre-tertiary certificate and/or a certificate are also given the Europass Diploma Supplement by the respective entity offering the programme.

Detailed information about the graduation ceremonies can be found on the [alumni website \(SD261\)](#).

5.9.2. Interim awards provision

The University General Regulations provide that students who do not fully satisfy the requirements of the programme that they registered for, may be entitled to an interim award on the basis of obtaining the required number of credits as specified in the below table:

Programme type	Programme level	ECTS credits
Undergraduate	University Pass Degree	lacks not more than 10 credits to complete the credit requirement for the award of the degree
Undergraduate	Diploma in General Studies	60
Undergraduate	Higher Diploma in General Studies	120
Undergraduate	Bachelor in General Studies	180
Postgraduate	Postgraduate Certificate	30
Postgraduate	Postgraduate Diploma	60

5.9.3. Award of *honoris causa* degrees

The University recognises those individuals whose accomplishments are of such excellence that they provide inspiration and leadership to its academic staff, its graduates, its students and to society at large. An *honoris causa* degree is the highest award the University can bestow and through its choice of recipients, the University makes a public declaration of its values. The conferment of honorary degrees by UM is regularly announced and shared on [Newspoint \(SD262\)](#).

The University has the power to confer the following *honoris causa* degrees on individuals for their outstanding achievements:

- Doctor of Literature, *honoris causa* (D.Litt.)
- Doctor of Science, *honoris causa* (D.Sc.)
- Doctor of Philosophy, *honoris causa* (D. Phil.)
- Master of Letters, *honoris causa* (M.Litt.)

Honoris causa degrees are only conferred during a convocation for the award of *honoris causa* degrees, held on a date as approved by the Senate, normally in November/December or March.

5.9.4. University alumni

The University is home to a growing body of alumni and the Marketing, Communications & Alumni Office is dedicated to serve this community. Following the graduation ceremonies, all students who are given a type of qualification and award, including those students who joined the University on particular student exchanges such as Erasmus+, are considered as UM alumni. University alumni are automatically given access to a number of online services. This keeps them informed about the latest developments at the University and has the intention of establishing a life-long relationship between the graduate and their *alma mater*.

5.9.5. Funding students' and graduates' creativity and innovation

The University of Malta together with the Malta Chamber of Commerce, Enterprise and Industry, and the Parliamentary Secretariat for Youth, Research and Innovation have launched the **Post-Doctoral Fellowship Scheme (SD368)**. This arrangement was brought to life with the aim of offering new opportunities for experience to recent doctoral graduates (both local and international) whilst boosting the local industry at the same time. Each selected project will be financed with a maximum of €60,000 per year for each researcher, which can be extended for a period of two years. This scheme provides a much-needed opportunity for the University of Malta to work closely with the Malta Chamber and the Parliamentary Secretariat with the aim of implementing various projects for research and innovation which leave a strong impact on the local industry.

TAKEOFF (SD366) is another initiative which helps our graduates and students in developing their creative and innovative ideas. This is Malta's first university-based, technology business incubator, specifically designed to help innovators and aspiring entrepreneurs create successful science, technology, engineering, creative media and other knowledge-based start-up businesses. Additionally, **ZAAR (SD367)** is Malta's first reward-based crowdfunding platform, co-founded by the Malta Business Bureau (MBB) and UM, designed to diversify access to finance for young entrepreneurs and their projects. A total of 30 companies have been incubated at TAKEOFF, including 20 which are still in existence.

5.10. The digitalisation process

In the past two decades, the University made huge investments in the implementation of new software programmes which have been used in order to shift from manual, inefficient and tedious processes to the more efficient and effective ones as expected in today's digital era. Through the phenomenon of 'thinking digital', the University is reaping the benefits of what has been sown in the past years. The idea is to continue investing in such infrastructures to stay up-to-date with today's current needs. As can be seen from the projects that were launched during the past years, the University increased its potential substantially through the investment of IT tools in various areas.

5.10.1. Admissions

Significant investment has been carried out in the admissions process, which has resulted in an improved overall efficiency. The University offers the online application facility to all of its potential students irrespective of the programme level that they are going to apply for. The forms have been designed according to the target population and the relevant sections are displayed according to the below factors:

- programme level (undergraduate, postgraduate, doctoral, Liberal Arts & Sciences, visiting)
- qualifications submitted by the applicant (local or overseas)
- any other special course requirements (e.g. police conduct certificate, proficiency tests, etc.).

The Liberal Arts & Sciences and visiting applications include the possibility for applicants to choose and pay for the respective study-units.

Admission

Online application
Application evaluation process

Progression

Student progression online
WISEflow platform
SMS notification
My UM app

Certification

Final classification on eSIMS
Digital credentials

An enhanced digitalisation of the student life-cycle

The post-application process has seen a major change when the new online method was launched. This process was implemented through a collective team effort between the Admissions & Records Office and the Online Application team within the SIMS Office. Whereas the manual vetting of the applications used to take weeks to be carried out, the new process is able to handle such work much more expediently.

5.10.2. Students' progression

Another advancement in this digitalisation process was the creation of the online task for students' progression. Before the new online process was launched, progression of students used to be carried out by printing student lists and sending them to the respective FICS. The process involved a lot of toing and froing between the central administration and FICS, apart from the waste of paper in order to print the lists. Through the new task, FICS users can send their progression decisions about every undergraduate student collectively according to each decision, thus being able to tick a number of students at one go. This option was vital in order to make the process less time-consuming.

5.10.3. WISEflow

Online examinations through the WISEflow platform were another technological achievement for the University of Malta. **WISEflow (SD243)** is a digital assessment platform that allows the creation of multiple-choice, short-answer, true/false, and other interactive exams, and can also be used for essay-based exams. Academic staff are encouraged to use WISEflow in order to benefit from its advantages, including the upload of examination papers and the marking of examinations online. This enabled the University to also actualise its vision to reduce the use of printed paper as part of its strategic aims on sustainability as outlined in the Strategic Plan apart from increasing the efficiency of the marking process.

WISEflow's versatility allows FICS to organise the same range of examinations, as per previous assessments, and to actually improve on them, through:

- added security, since questions and answers can be shuffled
- a content bank that allows the tagging of assessments, transfer of results on SIMS and faster classification and organisation
- faster correction, since there is no struggle with deciphering students' handwriting
- inclusion of more than one examiner at the same time, making the process shorter, since it can be done concurrently, rather than waiting for their turn to receive examination scripts.

Currently the University is undergoing an infrastructural project with the aim of using the WISEflow platform on a wider scale, where online exams will still be held on WISEflow, with the difference that these will be held physically on campus in our computer labs.

5.10.4. SMS notifications

Another technological initiative was the SMS notification facility through which students are given real-time updates. Important information is being sent to our students through the use of a task which enables all FICS academic and administrative staff to contact students regarding urgent matters such as when a lecture is postponed.

5.10.5. My UM app

The University strives to keep in line with new technologies in order to stay relevant. In the past years, the University kept abreast with recent tools and invested in publishing essential information on students' mobile devices through the **My UM app (SD299)**, which is available for download from the Apple and Google app stores. The app provides information, resources and services available at the University of Malta, which in turn increases client engagement. This method of communication was another means of information distribution channel. As a student at UM, this app provides support at all stages through:

- important news and events
- assignment deadlines
- University results
- Library services
- VLE
- eSIMS
- staff directory
- campus map
- personalised information

5.10.6. Digital student card

The University of Malta has just recently launched a **digital student card (SD369)** for all enrolled students. This is part of the University's ongoing digital enhancements to provide a better service to its students. UM students can now make use of services offered both on and off campus by presenting a digital identification as University of Malta students. Furthermore, all UM students may use this service abroad, even on an Erasmus+ mobility.

The My UM student card can be used in instances where students need to verify their enrollment status to obtain any discounts offered by museums, public transportation and any other services. Furthermore, any third parties that wish to grant University students services that require verification would be easily able to do so through the QR code found on the My UM student card which would verify if the student in question is actually an enrolled University student or not.

The UM digital student and staff card is also available via the **My UM app (SD299)**.

5.10.7. Final classification

In previous years, the final classification of all the students used to be published in alphabetical order and fixed on the noticeboards of the Administration Building and the respective FICS. Technological aid helped the University to maintain a much higher level of privacy through the option that was given to the students to view their final classification on their eSIMS portal. When the GDPR legislation was published, the University was already in line with the requirements of the privacy of our graduands.

5.10.8. Digital credentials

In collaboration with the SEA-EU and Europass, the Office of the Registrar embarked on a new project to provide **European Digital Credentials for Learning (SD365)** to all of the University of Malta graduands from 2021 onwards. The European Digital Credentials for Learning include a digital version of the scroll that is signed with a unique electronic seal (that is the digital equivalent of an institution's rubber stamp). This allows potential employers, education and training institutions to easily authenticate, validate and recognise credentials of any size, shape or form.

5.11. Conclusion

It is evident that UM tangibly applies pre-defined and publicly accessible statutes and regulations covering all the phases of its student 'life-cycle' from admission through to completion. The University's approach to student admission, progression, recognition and certification is implemented consistently and in a transparent manner. The processes are clearly communicated to the various stakeholders and are easily accessible. There are reliable tools to collect, monitor and manage student data and information at different stages of university life. Students receive considerable support and guidance throughout their time at UM to make sure they complete their programme successfully. Furthermore, the continuous digital enhancements to provide a higher quality service to our students is value added and puts UM at the forefront not only at national level but also on an EU level in this area. Therefore, the University is confident that it meets all the requirements of this Standard and will constantly look for enhancement and improvements.

Proposals for further development

In order to further strengthen this Standard the University of Malta is presently working on a number of projects to sustain meaningful enhancements to the student life-cycle.

Admissions

In an attempt to become more efficient, the University of Malta is working on

- a digital Letter of Acceptance which will be sent to students via email
- revamping the course finder feature so that prospective students are provided with a better browsing and personalised experience which leads them directly to programmes which are more aligned to their search interests.

Furthermore, the University is presently undergoing discussions with FICS in an attempt to review, and if possible reduce, the limited number of students indicated for some of its programmes. Another project that the University of Malta is currently working on is that of enabling Erasmus students to register for their selected study-units following the signing of the agreement.

Graduates

The University of Malta is presently working on a tracer study in order to collect data on its graduates including the graduate's university experience, the skills learned and quality of instruction and how this relates to employability. This will provide feedback on whether the University is providing the right skills to our students.

Policies, procedures, standards of practice and guidelines

Policies and procedures are an essential part of any organisation as they provide a roadmap for the day-to-day operations and provide guidance for decision-making. For this reason, the University is in the process of:

- organising all policies, procedures, SOPs and guidelines in a single portal
- formulating a standard format for policies, procedures, and guidelines
- ensuring that all SOPs are reviewed periodically.

Scheduling software

During the past year the University of Malta has been working on a new timetabling and resource scheduling software. This investment aims to save time, reduce human errors and increase efficiency. The software supports automatic updates of schedules with notifications on smart devices, online calendars, etc. The software will also be used for resource allocation and scheduling of examinations. A pilot project has already been implemented with the Faculty of Engineering and in the next semester the Faculty of Science and the Faculty of ICT will also be using the software to schedule and issue their timetables. All FICS across University together with the Junior College will eventually start using this software.

Business Intelligence

The University of Malta is aware of the importance of the effective use of management information to safeguard the quality and standards of the University. Furthermore, we recognise the importance of promoting enhancement of student learning opportunities and having a strong foundation on which we may make evidence-based decisions.

For this reason, a Business Intelligence system is currently being implemented in order to better understand, analyse, and monitor the following information:

- students' progress
- attrition
- demographics
- programmes
- market demands.

A pilot project is currently being implemented with two Faculties, two Institutes, two Centres and one School where FICS can have direct access to data analytics through dashboards and to inform their Annual Programme Review (See Standard 8 for further detail).

Curriculum planner

In order to create a more user-friendly and efficient approval facility to submit new or changes to existing study-units/programmes of study the University is currently working on developing a curriculum planner. The project will eliminate the current manual inputting and duplication of work involved by both APQRU and SIMS Office staff. The new tasks include:

- new online study-unit approval
- approval to amend existing study-unit details online

- new online programme of study approval
- approval to amend existing programmes of study online.

Research Student Management Module

Another project is that of the Research Student Management Module. During the past years the University has noticed an increase in students following Master by Research and doctoral programmes. For this reason, this project will facilitate:

- storing of additional data for research students
- setting up automatic triggers that can be used to alert supervisor/co-supervisors to submit progress reports follow-up on their students through meetings, reports, *viva-voce*, and examinations
- recording the title of research, Board of Examiners, supervisors, and co-supervisors
- creating an online platform for the dissemination of dissertations/theses and examiners' preliminary reports.

Reporting Cradle

The Reporting Cradle is a new component within SIMS that was bought with the intention of reshuffling the reports that are currently generated by the system. In order for this new component to function, IT Services have set the Unity software on the respective servers. The SIMS Office will then be able to produce various reports which read data from the different SIMS tables using two main software reports, namely Builder Software and Visual Studio.

The SIMS Office have organised a number of brainstorming sessions with the end-users in order to gather various proposals which will be implemented when drawing up and finalising the new reports. The technical team within the SIMS Office have attended various training sessions delivered by the mother company, in order to learn how to operate this component.

Once these new reports are launched, UM is expecting to experience the following improvements:

- reports are expected to run faster
- the technical setup of granting access to UM users is more straightforward
- handling of certain requests that previous reports could not handle
- better filtering options for end-users.

^[1] Cedefop (2011). Using learning outcomes. European Qualifications Framework Series:Note 4. Luxembourg: Publications Office; Cedefop (2017). Defining, writing and applying learning outcomes: a European handbook. Luxembourg: Publications Office. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2801/566770>

STANDARD 6: TEACHING STAFF

MFHEA EQA 2015 Judgement

UM meets the Standard

MFHEA EQA 2015
Recommendations

- UoM should progress its plans to establish a Professional Development Support Unit which will offer formal induction and a broader range of professional development opportunities, related to learning, teaching and assessment for staff.
- UoM needs to develop a more formal process for Staff Review and Development.
- UoM needs to progress its intent to establish a transparent process for the dissemination of outcomes of the End of Study Unit Evaluations and for the subsequent action planning and closing of loops.

UM Response (What policies, procedures, systems are currently in place to meet this Standard)

UM has clear procedures in place and a well-established system to plan, manage and monitor learning and teaching. This is evident in the University processes governing recruitment, induction, professional development and promotion of lecturing staff. In addition, the University offers stimulating working conditions to its staff members and promotes a positive atmosphere which encourages continuous improvement based on transparent feedback. This clear approach is reflected in the UM **Strategic Plan 2020–2025 (SD005)** which gives due importance to learning and teaching through allocating a specific **Strategic Theme on Learning and Teaching (SD006)**. This states that 'The training and continuing professional development of academic staff is an essential ongoing process at all levels in their academic trajectory'. In practice this is reflected in the various professional development programmes and training courses offered to academic (as well administrative and technical) staff. UM is confident that it plans and manages its learning and teaching in ways that meet the Standard and clearly respond to the 2015 recommendations.

6.1. Recruitment of academic staff

The **Collective Agreement for Academic Staff of the University of Malta 2019–2023 (SD267)** provides details of the recruitment process of academic members of staff. Section 2 of the Collective Agreement identifies the various appointments within the resident academic stream together with their respective eligibility criteria. The agreement also defines processes related to the recruitment of Visiting and Teaching Associate staff. This comprehensive document also outlines clear, fair and transparent processes for training and promotion, while

also specifying the agreed-upon work conditions. All University lecturing staff engaged on a full-time or part-time basis are subject to this Agreement as long as they form part of the grades to which the Agreement applies. Information about all lecturing staff, both full-time and part-time, is available on their respective online **profiles (SD361)**.

UM also has a set of guidelines on selection and recruitment, which have been recently updated and are expected to be approved during the UM Council meeting in February 2023. The guidelines document the whole process from identifying the need for new staff to recruitment while also highlighting procedures to ensure transparency and fairness throughout. The recruitment and selection process is audited on an annual basis by the UM internal auditors. The recruitment and selection process for top management positions and their related job descriptions are outlined in a comprehensive **manual (SD362)**.

6.2. Training and development

Believing in the importance of staff orientation in ensuring a constructive experience for new recruits, UM conducts several **orientation programmes (SD352)** for its new teaching staff. These orientation programmes help introduce them to the University's academic community through creating expectations and providing exposure to various types of assistance and major UM policies and regulations. In this way, with such varied **orientation sessions (SD353)** UM makes sure the newly-recruited staff is appropriately welcomed and the on-boarding process is functioning properly in a way that promotes faculty retention.

As part of implementing its strategic theme on learning and teaching, UM conducts continuous training and development of its staff including academics. This is a collaborative effort involving various UM academic entities and administrative directorates/units coordinated by the **Office for Human Resources Management & Development (HRMD) (SD233)**. HRMD strives to provide opportunities for training and development to all UM staff. These services are provided to cultivate a learning environment for employees whilst continuing to develop and enhance their workplace skills and consequently improving job effectiveness and performance throughout the University. Training is provided to members of staff starting from newly recruited employees, commencing with **Orientation (SD268)** and progressing to provide training in core competences and specialised fields. These **courses (SD269)** are specifically designed to meet the needs of the University and its employees. Certain short courses are designed to cater for the specific needs of individual departments and employee streams. Some training is also delivered in collaboration with governmental and non-governmental organisations. HRMD also offers training courses funded by the European Structural Funds Programme (**ESF.04.083 (SD270)**). A range of topics is included in this funded training program including laboratory-related technical courses, health and safety courses as well as quality and managerial courses. This training program was implemented between December 2019 and December 2022.

Furthermore, academic and managerial members of staff are provided with the **Academic Resources Fund (ARF) and Continuous Professional Development Fund (CPD) (SD271)** which may be used both locally and abroad to consistently expand their training and professional development. Administrative, technical and industrial staff can also avail themselves of the Staff Work Resources Fund to provide resources for their personal and professional development. Apart from these funds, the University annually awards scholarships through the **Scholarships and Bursaries Fund (SD272)**.

Since the 2015 audit, UM has made notable progress in planning and implementing staff professional development in various areas of interest through the establishment of the **Office for Professional Academic Development (OPAD) (SD229)** in 2018. The OPAD organises and designs professional development programmes, courses, and training to upskill lecturing staff. The OPAD provides UM academic staff with:

- courses and workshops intended to help them become better and more effective educators in higher education
- information and training on programme design, curriculum reform and testing, including the construction, implementation and validation of assessment
- workshops to develop research supervision skills.

The OPAD plays a key role in promoting digital education at UM by training as well as assisting academic staff to convert class-based courses to blended/online ones. Furthermore, it regularly offers the **Foundations of University Teaching and Learning programme (SD351)** aimed at early career academics. This programme is one of the requirements for the post of Senior Lecturer.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic (2020 to early 2022), a significant number of training courses were delivered to enhance the skills of all staff in order to ensure day-to-day administrative, teaching and research continuity. HRMD in collaboration with IT Services organised training such as on the use of the UM Virtual Learning Environment, Zoom, Google Meet and Panopto. Courses on the use of WISEflow (digital assessment platform) were also offered in collaboration with academics, the Office of the Registrar and IT Services. Academics are also being offered training and support on In-Person and Remote (P-R) teaching on an ongoing basis.

That the University of Malta's experience with learning and teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic was successful is evidenced by the positive response of UM students who participated in a **global survey on the impact of the situation on higher education (SD273)**. The **'Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Life of Higher Education Students'** study (SD350), led by Dr Aristovnik from the University of Ljubljana, aimed to capture the immediate economic and social effects of the crisis through a large-scale, quantitative **online survey (SD274)**. UM received a 3.79 rating out of a 5-point scale, surpassed only by New Zealand, with a rating of 3.84. The survey also looked at students' satisfaction with the shift from class-based to online learning. The University of Malta ranked first with respect to students' satisfaction with recorded videos and second with respect to the use of video conferences. This puts UM students amongst the most satisfied students in the over 150 universities in 100 countries and six continents included in the study.

In accordance with its vision and mission, UM seeks to attract and retain high-calibre academics while providing them with support services including an enhanced research infrastructure, internal and external funding, and clear research policies and guidelines which are promptly disseminated to all lecturing staff. The University's academic staff members actively engage in producing outstanding quality research that contributes to existing knowledge and has local, regional and international implications. The **Research Support Services Directorate (RSSD) (SD275)** and **Project Support Office (PSO) (SD276)** continue to be driven by a focus on research excellence to assist staff as they compete for limited funds.

Additionally, in line with its strategic theme '**Enterprise and Industry Impact**' (SD009), UM strives to enhance the learning experience of students through enterprise projects and assignments that facilitate practical interaction with industry. Lecturing staff are encouraged to engage students in project-based activities to gain experience in solving real-world problems, addressing critical questions and engaging in practical solutions with expert academic supervisors and industry advisors.

6.3. Childcare services for staff support

HRMD operates two childcare centres that cater for children up to three years of age. These support parents/guardians to study or work on campus and who can also benefit from the Government's **Free Childcare Scheme (SD277)**. **It-Tajra (SD278)** childcare centre opened its doors at the Msida Campus in April 1996 while the **Ilwien (SD279)** childcare centre has operated from the Junior College Campus since October 2013. These childcare centres also serve as focus for research studies in the areas of Early Childhood Education and Care theory and practice.

The childcare services of the University of Malta endeavour to provide a safe and healthy environment in which children can grow holistically. The staff, in collaboration with parents and other stakeholders, is committed to ensuring a creative environment conducive to learning through play and to instill in children an inquisitive attitude and love for learning. The centres' main goals, in line with the National Curriculum (2012) and the Learning Outcomes Framework for early years, are to foster the growth of children who:

- develop a strong sense of identity
- have a positive self-image
- are socially adept
- are effective communicators
- nurture positive attitudes towards learning and become engaged and confident learners.

6.4. Conclusion

The recruitment and training of teaching staff is governed by the Collective Agreement for Academic Staff of the University of Malta (2019-2023). This agreement outlines processes that are designed to support the professional development of all academic staff. As value added, the University provides funding to academic staff through its academic resource fund and CPD fund. This enables staff to attend conferences both locally and overseas, support scholarly activity and keep up to date with advances in teaching practice. Accordingly, UM is confident that it is assuring the competence and effectiveness of its lecturing staff. Clear, fair and transparent processes for the recruitment and professional development of staff are in place with appropriate conditions of employment. The University provides different types of support to its staff to enhance teaching and the student learning experience as well as promoting staff research and scholarly activity. The University's approach in this regard is comprehensive and well-established in a way that guarantees the successful fulfilment of all the requirements of the teaching staff standard.

Proposals for further development

In light of its comprehensive quality management system as well as internal quality audits and as an integral part of its self-reflection and continuous improvement approach, UM has identified a number of areas for improvement that can be further enhanced and developed. These are summarised as follows:

- The Selection and Recruitment guidelines have been completely revisited to reflect current selection and recruitment realities. Once approved by the Council, meetings will be scheduled with all Deans, Directors and Heads of Department to explain the procedures when recruiting new staff.
- The Collective Agreement outlines a tenure track process to assist and follow the development of newly appointed members of staff during their initial four years at UM. UM is in the process of setting up a tenure review board with the scope of evaluating the performance of members of staff in line with the duties and responsibilities according to the level of appointment as outlined in the Collective Agreement.
- Notwithstanding these positive achievements, UM is aware of the need to enhance its portfolio of staff training in order to ensure that training is responsive to the needs of staff and the University itself. In this regard, more resources are needed to: (a) enhance the portfolio of teacher development training aimed at mid-career academics; and (b) offer teacher development training for sessional/part-time academics.
- UM is in the final stages of planning a training programme aimed at academics in, or aspiring for, leadership roles. The first set of training workshops focusing on different aspects of leadership will be rolled-out in the near future.
- The University is exploring the possibility of extending the Foundations of University Teaching and Learning professional development training to new academic staff.

STANDARD 7: LEARNING RESOURCES AND STUDENT SUPPORT

MFHEA EQA 2015 Judgement

UM surpasses the Standard

MFHEA EQA 2015
Recommendations

- The uniform and stringent budget process for allocating learning resources should be described and communicated transparently to all staff, both academic and administrative.

UM Response (What policies, procedures, systems are currently in place to meet this Standard)

The University of Malta has been steadily investing in its learning resources and student support services in order to offer its students an adequate learning environment with readily accessible resources. UM is keen to attend to the needs of its diverse student population regardless if they are full-time, part-time, international as well as students with disabilities. A range of student support services that cater for in-person, online and blended learning are in place in a way that facilitate the different modes of learning at the University. In addition, UM is committed to equality, diversity and inclusivity, with a number of joint Senate and Council committees and groups working in these areas. The University adopts a comprehensive approach to learning resources and student support planning and management, as clearly detailed in the following sections, which reveal the robust existing system at UM.

7.1. The Library

The remit of the **Library (SD197)** is to support UM's teaching programmes and research initiatives by providing adequate scholarly information resources, emerging technologies and user support services. Moreover, the Library is responsible for the implementation of Open Science principles and practices which enhance the visibility and impact of research being generated by UM.

Being the leading academic library on the Maltese Islands, the Library houses approximately one million print monographs, over 60,000 e-journals and a wide spectrum of databases and e-book collections. Moreover, its holdings include a prestigious **Melitensia Collection (SD281)**, which comprises works about Malta, publications authored by Maltese scholars, or works about any aspect of Maltese studies by any author, and publications on the Order of St John. Additionally, the **Archives and Rare Books Department (SD282)** encompasses a significant range of literary manuscripts, historical papers and archival records, as well as prestigious collections of rare books and local cartographic material.

The Library consists of a central building on the main campus, with satellite libraries at the Faculties of Arts, Laws and Theology, the Valletta Campus, the Junior College and the Gozo Campus. Moreover, the Library also supports the European Documentation Centre, the Confucius Institute Library, the German Language Resource Centre, the Faculty for the Built Environment Library, the Cottonera Resource Centre and

the Centre for Environmental Education & Research Resource Centre.

In line with foreign academic institutions, the Library is working in a rapidly changing information landscape where, on one hand, academic publishers are continuously developing new business models for the provision of online information resources, while on the other hand, students and researchers are constantly tapping into the Library to satisfy their emergent information needs and expectations. Subsequently, to provide the necessary information resources in a timely fashion, the Library has shifted most of its print collections onto easily accessible online resources. To this effect, the Library has negotiated additional licence agreements for the provision of online content with most of the reputable academic publishers. These online resources support unlimited simultaneous access and can be consulted remotely on a 24/7 basis.

To facilitate the acquisitions of online resources, the Library implemented *Rialto* as an integrated acquisition software supported by ProQuest. *Rialto* is a comprehensive solution which provides a seamless and unified workflow for the selection and acquisitions of online content, particularly e-books, from a variety of publishers, aggregators and host operators. The implementation of such a platform eliminates the duplicated efforts inherent in searching across a variety of online systems and publishers' platforms, and also supports Library staff during collection management and collection development processes.

Additionally, the Library has implemented *Leganto* as a Reading Lists Solution. The scope of this software is to support UM academics with the compilation, monitoring and dissemination of reading lists made available for study-units in an effective and efficient way. Moreover, *Leganto* is a very convenient and engaging software that enables students to track reading-related tasks assigned by tutors and supervisors. This platform has also been integrated with the Library's Management System, *Alma*, and with the Discovery and Delivery portal, *HyDi*. Subsequently, *Leganto* generates messages to the Library when course material recommended by academics is not part of the Library's holdings – hence, it facilitates the process for the Library to identify and acquire texts recommended by academics in a timely manner.

The Library has also embarked on an ambitious digitisation project whereby all print dissertations (approximately 17,000 volumes) housed within the Melitensia Special Collection have been digitised and made available for consultation on 24/7 remote access. The Library has also expanded its digitisation project pertaining to Special Collection. Digitising this unique and prestigious content will enhance the visibility of the treasures of the Library and provide enhanced access, both at national and international level.

The Library strives to provide a supportive environment which is conducive to innovation and creativity, and which stimulates learning and teaching, both individually and collaboratively. To this effect, various reading halls were refurbished to create study spaces which cater for the various users' needs and expectations.

The Library has also implemented an ongoing outreach programme to enhance awareness pertaining to the wide spectrum of resources and services offered by the Library. Moreover, to equip our users with the necessary information literacy skills, the Library has implemented a comprehensive programme of training workshops and instruction sessions pertaining to the use of scholarly resources and information retrieval tools.

Being a service-driven and user-oriented entity within UM, capacity building and staff retention are fundamental elements which are exceptionally pertinent for the Library to fulfil its responsibilities, maintain its momentum, successfully build on past achievements, and to implement challenging and ambitious projects which are in the pipeline. Subsequently, Library staff are provided with CPD opportunities by participating in training events and programmes of studies to ensure that the Library maintains a professionally trained staff to help promote its services and resources effectively amongst all Library users.

Open Science is a top item on the agenda of all academic libraries. To this effect, the Library has implemented an **Open Access Policy (SD283)** for UM, which stipulates that UM academics are to deposit copies of their research papers on the UM Institutional Repository (**OAR@UM (SD284)**) which was set up and is managed by the Library. Open Access is the practice of providing online access to scientific information which is free of charge on the public internet to any user for any lawful purpose without financial, legal or technical barriers. The benefits of Open Access include the collection and preservation of research generated under the auspices of UM, facilitates wider dissemination which enhances the visibility of research and increases usage and impact of research results, enhances the reputation of UM researchers which ultimately augments the reputation, visibility and ranking of UM, as well as strengthens international collaboration. An Institutional Repository is an online platform where UM academics can upload their research publications preferably in Open Access. To date over 94,000 items have been deposited, including scientific articles, books and book chapters, audio-visual content, Maltese journals, and electronic theses and dissertations.

Moreover, the Library is also actively contributing towards various entities and pan-European projects pertaining to Open Science. These include OpenAire, the National Points of Reference for Scientific Information Working Group, and the SEA-EU and reSEARCH-EU projects, the National Open Access Committee and the European University Association Expert Group on Open Science. The scope of these collaborations is to support institutions with the implementation of Open Access and Research Data Management policies and infrastructures.

To enhance the visibility and dissemination of research output generated by UM academics and researchers, the Library has also implemented an automated workflow which enables the compilation of the Publications Lists, found on the Academic Staff Profiles, to be generated directly from OAR@UM. This implementation reduces administrative burden on academics, eliminates duplication of efforts, and automatically provides a hyperlink to the full text of the research papers forming the Publications Lists rather than simply providing a bibliographic listing.

Now that Open Access to research publications has been widely accepted by the UM research community, the Library is in the process of implementing a Research Data Management Policy for UM. This policy will provide guidelines on how to organise, structure, store, curate and possibly share research data used or generated during the lifetime and after completion of a research project. Additionally, to facilitate access to and reusability of data, the Library will be implementing a Data Repository for UM. This will serve as a platform where UM scholars can upload and share datasets generated by research.

7.2. IT Services

IT Services maintain several IT systems to support staff and students with learning, teaching and research. These IT systems include: a suite of **online tools to facilitate communication, collaboration and storage of data (SD285)** (Google Workspace for Education); a **virtual learning environment (SD286)** (Moodle); **plagiarism detection software (SD287)** (Turnitin); **lecture recording software (SD288)** (Panopto); **web conferencing software (SD289)** (Zoom); and **service management and live chat software (SD290)** to manage IT support requests (UniDesk).

In addition to these, IT Services maintain the **instructional technologies (audio-visual) (SD291)** in teaching spaces and computers in computer training rooms, research laboratories and **open study spaces (SD292)**. The University campuses are provisioned with the **eduroam Wi-Fi service (SD293)**. IT Services also manage software licences (e.g. MS Office, Turnitin, Zoom, Panopto, SPSS, NVivo, Matlab, Mathematica, ArcGIS, etc.) used by staff and students for teaching, learning and research. IT Services support academics and research students with the procurement of cloud services through the Open Clouds for Research Environments framework.

IT Services support the Office of the Registrar to manage the **student records system (SD294)** (SITS Tribal) and the **digital assessment platform (SD228)** (WISEflow). IT Services are currently supporting the Office of the Registrar to roll out a time-tabling software (**Scientia (SD295)**) to enhance the student learning experience. Similarly, IT Services support the University Library to manage the provision of electronic resources/journals (**HyDi (SD296)** and **OAR@UM (SD284)**) and other IT-based systems (e.g. **Leganto Reading Lists (SD298)**) that support staff and students in teaching, learning and research. In collaboration with several UM departments, IT Services also maintain the official UM app (**My UM app (SD299)**) which is a University-wide initiative to improve the mobile experience of students, staff and visitors who interact with the UM community. The app also enables students and staff to receive personalised announcements on their mobile devices.

The My UM app currently offers these useful features:

- Campus map – Search campus maps for buildings and locations
- eSIMS – Access to eSIMS (students only)
- Results – View results (students only)
- Results notification – This will be sent out immediately when a new result is published (students only)
- VLE – Access forum posts and VLE messages, view assignment deadlines (students only)
- Enrolment – Enrol on programmes (available as from 1 October – students only)
- Library – View books on loan, renew books, search the catalogue and reserve books
- News – Provides selectable RSS feeds of University news and events
- Key information – Provides information about University services
- Digital student card

IT Services support the Estates, Facilities & Capital Development Directorate with the setting up of the IT infrastructure and equipment in new and refurbished teaching spaces and open learning spaces.

Staff and students are provided with a UM IT account to access all IT systems mentioned above. The services mentioned above are supported through:

- a. self-help information and **user guides (SD300)** on the **IT Services website (SD196)**
- b. **training and workshops (SD302)**
- c. live chat, phone and in-person support during these **hours (SD303)**.

7.3. Student support

7.3.1. Societal impact: equity, diversity and inclusion

The Strategic Plan 2020–2025 emphasised the University of Malta's impact on society through its commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion, which falls under the responsibility of the Pro-Rector for Student & Staff Affairs and Outreach. The plan states that UM "**strives to support our community, both within the University and in wider society, with the involvement of students and staff. We aim to stimulate public responsibility and inspire public service to actively identify opportunities and maintain a lead-by-example approach**". The plan commits UM to:

- assist students and members of staff with disability
- support under-represented and first-generation students
- advance and commit to gender and LGBTIQ rights
- ensure access to students and staff of diverse cultures
- expand health promotion and wellbeing services
- engage the campus community
- promote public outreach

In order to strengthen, develop and synergize the intersections of gender, race, ethnicity, disability and other spheres of diversity, in 2022 UM set up an **Equity Committee (SD045)** that is supported by an Equity Office. This Office will lead the implementation of the **Equity Plan (SD304)** with an established **Action Plan and timeframes (SD305)**. The Internal Audit Function is represented on the Equity Committee and the Equity Office gathers institutional data that guides policy both at the University and Junior College (JC), which has its own **Diversity Committee (SD244)** and equity plan approved by the JC Board in 2021. Vulnerable and under-represented groups are protected by a university-wide **Harassment and Bullying Policy (SD297)** that was reviewed and revised in 2021.

7.3.2. ACCESS – Disability Support Committee/Unit

The University of Malta supports all persons who have access requirements because of an impairment, medical condition or specific learning difficulties to ensure an inclusive community. Persons with access requirements may be students who satisfy the entry requirements of UM and wish to continue their education at tertiary level as well as members of staff who require support during their working time on campus. UM has updated its regulations to safeguard reasonable accommodation to facilitate access, retention and completion of studies. The **ACCESS – Disability Support Committee (ADSC) (SD039)** and its administrative arm, the **ACCESS – Disability Support Unit (ADSU) (SD241)** have seen a growing number of students apply for support.

The ADSU has the following roles:

- provide support to students, staff and visitors with a disability
- process applications for programmes and examination access arrangements at JC and UM
- process applications for examinations access arrangements for the Matriculation and Secondary Education Certificate (MATSEC) examinations
- guide students at JC and UM regarding the various types of support they can obtain during the course of their studies
- liaise with academic, administrative and technical staff about matters related to access issues
- liaise with relevant professionals and other stakeholders
- form part of the working groups appointed by the ADSC, including those set up to decide about the access arrangements to be given to each student on a case-by-case basis
- coordinate the necessary resources for the implementation of the decisions made by the ADSC.

Access arrangements are provided for students with physical, sensory or mental impairments, medical conditions or specific learning difficulties. The most common arrangements are: extra time, venue alone or with fewer students, use of a computer, enlargement of examination papers, flexibility with deadlines for assignments and other coursework. Requests for access arrangements are discussed on a one-to-one basis by the relevant working group in order to ensure that each student is provided with reasonable accommodation according to their needs.

The ADSC regularly updates the **University of Malta Access Arrangements (SD306)** and **MATSEC guidelines (SD307)**. The criteria for providing access arrangements for MATSEC candidates have been widened, while students with disability who wish to continue studying at UM may be given an exemption from the entry criteria if there is a shortfall due to their disability. The following tables show how the work of the ADSC has increased over the years:

2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
404	496	585	621	584	572	548	564	593	647	649

Number of MATSEC candidates using access arrangements

2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
98	145	183	201	247	294

Number of students using access arrangements at UM

The ADSC is also represented on the UM Fitness to Practise Board to make sure that access arrangements for students with disability are taken into account in the work of this board. Through the ADSC-Accessibility Working Group, it ensures that buildings and facilities on campus are accessible. It has also ensured that UM has a wheelchair-accessible vehicle to address the needs of persons with reduced mobility on campus. A newly set-up ADSC-AACC/IT working group is working on creating guidelines and criteria to ensure that students with disability can benefit from relevant technological advances as access arrangements for their course and examinations.

One of the current initiatives being carried out at UM is the development of Course Access Needs (CAN) reports through which students are supported to communicate with their lecturers any information they wish to share about their support needs, especially during lectures. This system is being developed with the SIMS Office.

Finally, it is currently carrying out a research project titled 'Access to Tertiary Education for Persons with Disability' (ACTED) with the aim of continuing to improve its services for students with disability. In view of the increased role of the ADSU, the University has employed an occupational therapist and a social worker specialising in disability. However, it still needs a central and accessible working area that will accommodate all its members of staff that are currently dispersed in different offices. Moreover, it needs better administrative support.

7.3.3. Gender Equality & Sexual Diversity Committee (GESDC)

The Gender Issues Committee was originally set up in 1991 to act as a focal point on gender issues but in recent years the Council extended its remit to include sexual diversity.

The Committee works on several areas including the identification of sources of unequal opportunities or treatment with respect to gender, and it promotes a policy of equal opportunity.

The **Gender Equality and Sexual Diversity Committee (SD027)** was the prime mover of the *Gender+ Equity Plan* cited above and pushes the UM administration to ensure it implements the targets. The **six key areas of the Plan (SD305)** revolve around the following themes:

- Governance bodies, key actors and decision-making organisational culture
- Equity, diversity and inclusion
- Recruitment, career progression and retention

- Work and personal life integration, including Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)
- Sex/gender, diversity & inclusion perspective and approach in research and research teams
- Integration of sex/gender, diversity, equity and inclusion in teaching content (mainstreaming).

The Committee also receives and monitors complaints from University staff and students with regard to sex discriminatory practices with the recommendation of appropriate action, and liaises closely with the sexual harassment advisors. It is also a promoter of the **Sexual Harassment Policy (SD308)** that has been updated in 2021 after wide consultation (that included unions) because it is entrenched within the University's Collective Agreements for academics and administrative staff for greater impact.

The Committee carried out a university-wide survey on the state of awareness on sexual harassment issues among staff and students which highlighted the importance of wider dissemination through communication and better implementation.

It is also looking at a fairer representation of all segments of the UM population in the University's communications effort. The Co-Chair of the Committee was the driver behind a **Good Practice in Inclusive Language (SD309)** that was endorsed by the Senate.

GESDC established networks with individuals and organisations with similar objectives, from outside the University and those in the international scene. One of GESDC's initiatives, which has only taken root in a sporadic way, is the Mentoring Scheme for students and staff, since mentoring is highly recommended in all areas of inclusion.

7.3.4. Committee on Race and Ethnic Affairs (CREA)

CREA is a joint Council and Senate Committee that met for the first time in February 2021. It conducted a Multi-Faith Questionnaire developed by the Committee. It proceeded to make recommendations on the establishment of a multicultural centre that would serve as a platform to teach/publish/inform about cultures by adopting a multidisciplinary approach. The architectural aspect of this centre was deemed important.

7.3.5. Reaching out to different socio-economic groups

While tertiary education in Malta is mostly free for nationals and people with a refugee status, it remains out of reach for the disadvantaged and some vulnerable segments of society. The University has facilitated access for refugees with free courses at the **International School for Foundation Studies (SD188)**, but the plight of refugee students is wider than the support we can give through fee waivers, and most of the students find it difficult to meet the demands of the programme while they maintain full-time employment to sustain themselves and their families.

The University (through the Faculty of Education) collaborates with the Intercultural and Anti-Racism Unit, which is Malta's entry point to migrant integration. UM partakes in the '**I Belong**' (SD310) Programme which aims to provide a holistic approach to integration through the knowledge of the country's official languages (Maltese and English) and increased cultural awareness. It also plays a crucial role in the training and accreditation of cultural mediators.

The **Cottonera Resource Centre** (CRC) (SD311) was deemed to be important to reach out to students from under-represented communities. It served as an outpost in Cottonera and the surrounding area and for years it served as a station for UM to try and create a 'conversation' with the community.

7.3.6. Student Solidarity Fund

The **Student Solidarity Fund** (SSF) (SD312) of the University of Malta assists students facing financial difficulties with basic and essential needs. The fund was launched to help students struggling to get basic and essential needs in the COVID-19 pandemic and aims to provide "*first-hand instant and interim relief*" to students suffering financially. Although set up in response to the pandemic, the fund has continued to assist students.

The Rector has set up a committee to evaluate requests and disburse the donations. Requests are evaluated in consultation with professionals, including UM social workers at the Health & Wellness Centre. The SSF is supported by the *Kunsill Studenti Universitarji* (KSU). UM staff and students contribute towards this initiative.

In its first two years (May 2020-May 2022) UM social workers assessed a total of 70 cases. Of the 64 students assisted by the SSF at UM, three were students attending the Junior College. The details are sub-divided as follows:

- 39 students were supported with accommodation-related expenses which included help with payment of rent expenses, support with utility bill expenses, support with purchase of appliances, and food donations
- 13 students were helped with medical-related expenses
- 12 students were supported with study-related expenses which included help with purchase of stationery, donation and purchase of books.

Other material support, including food donations, are supported by the University Chaplaincy.

7.3.7. Scholarships for Non-EU/Non-EEA students

The University offers funding to a number of non-EU University students according to set criteria published by the institution. These scholarships are awarded to postgraduate (mainly by research) students and doctoral students. Some of these scholarships are offered through the Official Development Assistance programme by the Government of Malta in conjunction with the University of Malta. One of the aims of this programme is to promote solidarity and provide assistance in a number of key areas.

7.3.8. Setting up a Doctoral School at the University

In 2017, the University recognised the need of having a central structure to assist its doctoral students. The School provides advice to students and supervisors on policies and practices concerning doctoral research, including informal matters about the supervisory relationship.

The Doctoral School team is committed to support and enhance the research experience of all doctoral candidates at the University. It strives to bring together doctoral researchers and supervisory teams to benefit from the sharing of best practices. It promotes the idea to work with different groups across the University to promote widespread dissemination of doctoral research. The Doctoral School works with other service providers to ensure that researchers are equipped with knowledge and skills that can be applied to academic or non-academic career paths they choose to follow.

7.3.9. Health & Wellness Centre/Counselling Services Unit

The Health & Wellness Centre's (SD200) Counselling Services Unit (CSU) plays a caring role within the University of Malta community, including the Junior College. A multi-disciplinary team consisting of psychologists, psychotherapists, counsellors, social workers and a mindfulness practitioner offer a range of psycho-social-spiritual interventions to support the UM community.

The CSU aims to support its clients to enjoy positive lifestyles by promoting the adoption of the whole person paradigm, so UM students and staff may integrate their personal and professional selves, developing a balanced lifestyle. In line with the WHO declaration of 2013 which recognises that the *'enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health is one of the fundamental rights of every human being'*, The CSU promotes mental health and wellbeing for all UM members and beyond. By contributing towards the members' wellbeing during the experience on campus, the CSU supports them to reach their full potential while at University, so they can cope with life stressors, work productively and make valid contributions towards society.

This was made possible by the University's investment in a human resource capacity building at the CSU and the support of the Office for Human Resources Management & Development. The assertive outreach led to a substantial increase in the number of counselling sessions given as illustrated in the following table:

Counselling Services – Client appointments 2018 to 2021					
Academic year	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	Comment
New cases	389	424	480	507 (end June)	New cases doubled
Sessions given	2255	3814	4472		50% increase
Nationality					
Maltese		80%	78%		2% increase in non-EU clients
EU		9.4%	9.6%		
Non-EU		4.9%	6.8%		
Doctoral students	Not recorded	1.05% (4)	1.7% (8)	1.4% (7) end June	New cases doubled

Counselling Services – Clients' appointments 2018–2021

The counselling professionals are supported by other mental health professionals that include a visiting psychiatrist as part of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Mater Dei Hospital (MDH). Psychiatric services are offered once weekly on Wednesdays to students and staff requiring such interventions. The number of clients has increased as follows:

Psychiatric Appointments					
Total no. of attendees			Total no. of new clients		
2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
181	160	211	51	30	72

Psychiatric appointments

The Centre is open from Monday to Friday from 07:30 to 20:00. UM members were encouraged to request services online through counselling@um.edu.mt and/or to access other services including the Richmond Foundation helpline (1770) and SOS Malta through www.kellimni.com. During the pandemic, counselling professionals and clients expressed appreciation of the fact that they could engage in effective psychological interventions from the safety of their home. In the post-pandemic period immediate attention is given to those cases that are deemed to require urgent interventions.

Apart from one-to-one counselling, the Unit organises resiliency groups, training in leadership and advanced mentoring skills as well as more comprehensive **training in the handling of challenging and suicidal students (SD313)**. **Staff guidelines (SD314)** on how to support severely distressed/suicidal students are available in print and online. The Counselling Unit is called to provide support to friends and family in their bereavement whenever a member of our university community falls victim to suicide.

Despite the strengthening and diversification of services offered, the CSU aims to improve the quality of services offered by developing a seamless referral system for UM members requiring specialised interventions such as for eating disorders, substance abuse issues and long-term therapy.

In an agreement with Public Health at Mater Dei Hospital, the Centre also benefits from the following services, some of which were interrupted during the COVID-19 pandemic:

Drug-related, alcohol and compulsive gambling issues: The University of Malta has teamed up with *Sedqa* to offer support to students and staff who are facing these issues directly or indirectly. Support is available and seeking help is a mature step towards recovery. Two *Sedqa* social workers attend weekly on Mondays to offer support to UM members suffering from such addictions.

Nutritional advice: Through one-on-one nutritional advice, the nutritionist offers information about food portion sizes, healthier food choices, how to read food labels, how to calculate the BMI and how to lose or maintain an ideal weight. Prior to the pandemic a public health professional was available on a weekly basis.

Sexual Health Clinic: The clinic offers information about different methods of contraception, contraceptives, diagnosis and treatment available, information and advice about the prevention of sexually transmitted infections, advice about vaccines and smear testing, and referral to the Genitourinary Clinic for testing and counselling. Prior to the pandemic, services were offered upon request.

Tobacco cessation support: The Health Promotion and Disease Directorate provides free confidential and individual smoking cessation services at the University of Malta. The sessions with the smoking cessation advisor address one's smoking habits and help one prepare a tailor-made quitting plan for a successful and healthy lifestyle change. Prior to the pandemic a public health professional was available on a weekly basis.

As part of its outreach, the Counselling Unit is producing a video about study skills in collaboration with the Marketing, Communications & Alumni Office and KSU. It is intended that the video will be placed on the KSU website, so it may be viewed by those students requiring improvement of their study skills without making direct use of the CSU's services. Preventative interventions can take place in digital fashion.

The Unit has also followed the recommendation of the Internal Audit Function and it will be offering a module in Leadership Skills and Conflict Resolution through **DegreePlus (SD198)**.

The University has invested in the human resources required to meet the growing demand that has resulted from the Centre's outreach efforts. The space used by the Health & Wellness Centre is shared with the Centre for Traditional Chinese Medicine, and the need for more space is regularly brought to the administration's attention by the Head of the Centre.

In spite of the increase in human resources and the additional engagement of part-time sessional counsellors, a spike in the number of clients sometimes creates a long waiting-list. This is a matter for concern that is discussed and addressed as soon as the UM administration is alerted. The CSU anticipates that, on the basis of international experience, the number of clients in proportion to the UM population may reach a saturation point in the near future.

7.3.10. The Chaplaincy

The **Chaplaincy (SD199)** aims to support staff and students during their time at University, through a warm welcome, spiritual support and pastoral care to staff and students of all faiths and none. When required it also supports the Counselling Unit and the Student Solidarity Fund, if necessary.

Staff and students may relax, unwind or study in the common rooms, meet new friends, talk to the chaplain or use the chapel for some quiet time. At any point, they may also use the space provided by the Jesuit community at Dar Manwel Magri (DMM), which is located just a few metres away from the University Chaplaincy.

Mass is celebrated in the chapel every Monday to Friday at 07:20 and 12:30 during the academic year, at 7:10 during the summer months, on Saturday evening at 19:30 and on Sunday in English at 11:00.

Several events are also organised by the Chaplaincy, from **voluntary work (SD315)** to **activities (SD316)** in the areas of spirituality, community and service.

7.3.11. Help Hub

The **Help Hub (SD201)** at the University of Malta provides support to current students in a range of areas in the role of a one-stop-shop.

This is the place that provides students with all the up-to-date information that may be required, brings students closer to the full range of support services offered at UM, as well as provides easy access to the vast network of student services.

The Help Hub brings together many of the key services offered at our University in one easily accessible place. Located within Students' House, right off the main Quadrangle, the Help Hub provides students with the necessary individual as well as focused attention when registering an enquiry and asking for guidance through a one-stop-shop service.

Students are advised on student life on campus, including admissions, finance, accommodation, exchange programmes, examination access arrangements and more.

7.3.12. Student Advisory Services (SAS)

This service provides prospective and current students of the University of Malta with career-related information. It provides support to help them make informed decisions about their career paths and programmes of study within the local context.

This is done through the provision of information and advisory services at the University and at the Junior College while keeping in constant contact with various stakeholders. The team assists the Office of the Registrar when dealing with enquiries relating to programmes of study. These services are also offered to schools, particularly those at the post-secondary level, to ensure that prospective students have updated information about entry to UM.

Services also operate in close liaison with all Faculties, Institutes, Centres and Schools at UM, as well as with the Health & Wellness Centre, the Admissions & Records Office and other sections within the Office of the Registrar.

SAS also advises mature students and those who apply for programmes on the basis of the **Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) (SD253)**, whereby UM recognises learning obtained through formal, non-formal and informal learning other than the mainstream certification. This may include the acquisition of competences gained through educational institutions such as schools, colleges, workplaces, life and work experiences, or even through personal interests. During the RPL process, University applicants are assisted to compile a portfolio of their learning experiences, that may be verified and validated. This portfolio is developed with the support of a Student Advisor (RPL Coordinator). Currently, some long-established Faculties (namely Medicine and Law) refuse students who apply through this path.

7.3.13. Student societies

UM has several **student societies (SD280)** that are recognised by the Senate and are an integral part of campus life. There are around 70 organisations, some of which are university-wide whereas others are Faculty or Department-based. These societies offer students an opportunity to participate in interests other than those that are purely academic and to extend their network of friends, besides broadening their perspectives. Recognised student societies are eligible for **student grants (SD317)**.

Student organisations are recognised on the basis of regulations approved in the **Education Act (Cap 327) (SD018)** of 2019, whereby the *Kunsill Studenti Universitarji* was recognised as the students' union for the first time in its 120-year history.

The Students' Society Committee is in discussions with the Office of the Commissioner for Voluntary Organisations and *Aġenzija Żgħazagħ* to cut down on unnecessary bureaucracy in the recognition process that may stifle student activism.

7.3.14. University of Malta Debating Union (MUDU)

The **University of Malta Debating Union** (MUDU) (**SD318**), set up by the Rector of the University of Malta in collaboration with the University Student Council (KSU), aims to:

- promote debate and discussion
- train students in the art and style of debate and discussion
- provide a forum for debates on issues of national and international concern.

The Union aims to provide a safe space to generate well-informed opinions and to facilitate salient discussions through quality events and a system of training and feedback. It aims to provide training and feedback by trained professionals in the field to change the previously-daunting perception of debating into an irreplaceable skill set.

7.3.15. Student representation on governance bodies

Student representation on governance bodies is crucial for the University. Representatives on the Senate and the Council are directly elected by their peers. The University acknowledges that active participation of students is crucial for campus life and students' participation increased at all levels. University students can elect their representatives through an online facility available on the website **electionbuddy.com** (**SD319**). The University provides access credentials to each and every student in order to be eligible to cast their vote in the respective election.

University students are offered a unique opportunity to participate in the decision-making process of Faculties, Institutes, Centres and Schools as the University firmly believes in the capabilities and integrity of its students. The skills and knowledge that are gathered through this venture of representing fellow students is a worthwhile endeavour which will prove to be a very useful experience in their future career.

The University encourages its students to participate in the University's administrative and academic affairs, and in the organisation of activities carried out by student societies. The University believes that the participation and consequent learning that is received through this experience will help to develop the students' interpersonal and group skills.

UM offers an optional 2-ECTS study-unit, **PSY2650 (SD320)**, Student representation at University, offered by the **Department of Psychology (SD321)**, to combine experiential learning with active reflection on that learning. This is meant to facilitate student participation in a number of meetings within University structures such as Senate, Council, Faculty Boards and Boards of Studies, and to recognise their preparation for

the said meetings, as well as student participation in Senate-recognised student societies through their roles as executive members. It also gives students the opportunity to participate in a structured experiential seminar as well as to reflect on their learning through a reflective log on their practice.

The success of this study-unit is also due to the fruitful relationship the Office of the Registrar has with the KSU, which has actively promoted this study-unit. In order to ensure that student representation is effective, students are encouraged to register for this study-unit, which enables the development of interpersonal, group and communication skills. It also fosters an increased awareness of the impact of student participation within the University's structures and its response to societal needs. To register for this study-unit students must be student representatives on one of the various boards of the University of Malta or a committee member of one of the student societies recognised by the Senate.

7.3.16. The Students' Charter

The University of Malta **Student Charter (SD322)** was reviewed and revised in 2021. The University Senate, in cooperation with the KSU, had adopted the original Student Charter in 2003, which was further updated on 28 July 2015 (the "Original Charter").

The purpose of the present Student Charter is to serve as a point of reference for students and staff by defining, in its various sections, the rights and responsibilities of students, the KSU as the University's student union, and the University.

The present Charter wholly replaces the Original Charter with a view to: (a) further build on the role of the KSU, which was officially recognised by the University Senate as the University's student union; (b) further define the obligations of the University vis-à-vis its students; and (c) elaborate the role of the Student Charter Senate Sub-Committee.

Among students and staff, this Charter promotes a spirit of courtesy, acceptance, consideration and teamwork. It values academic freedom, seeks equality of opportunity and encourages students to become involved in decision-making at all levels.

This Charter does not constitute a legally binding agreement. Rather, it is a statement of principles that describes an understanding of how we work together to reach our common goals and maintain a multi-faceted learning community.

7.3.17. University of the Third Age (U3A)

The U3A in Malta was launched in Valletta on 23 January 1993 under the auspices of the University of Malta. The range of **learning programmes (SD323)** and quality of knowledge dissemination is both extensive and impressive, so that the Maltese U3A is now firmly established as a key pillar in Maltese national policies on lifelong learning and active ageing.

There are no admission requirements and the U3A is open to everyone above the age of 60, irrespective of any educational or academic qualifications. Lectures are delivered in Maltese unless the lecturer is a non-native speaker. The U3A operates from **seven centres (SD324)**, six in Malta – Floriana, Sliema, Ħamrun, Vittoriosa, Birżebbuġa, and Mellieħa – and one in Gozo.

7.3.18. Campus radio

Based at the University of Malta's Msida Campus, **Campus FM (SD325)** houses two professional studios with digital recording and editing facilities, and is one of the channels of communication of the University with the rest of Maltese society. Most programmes are produced by UM and Junior College academics, UM employees and students.

In the past two years the studios were refurbished, and the content significantly improved. Live programmes were introduced, which resulted in an increase in audience followership. Starting from Freshers' Week 2022, Campus FM started transmitting live from outside the studio from various parts of the University campus to engage more students and a younger audience.

In the Broadcasting Authority Audience Survey of June 2022, Campus FM climbed to 2.1% of listeners surveyed. The Chair of the Board remarked that *"this position puts the University radio immediately after 'the big ones', overtaking listeners of established stations such as Smash, 103 (ex-RTK) and Radju Malta 2."*

7.3.19. The International Office

In the past decade, Malta's population registered a 25% increase, or an average of 10,000 persons per year. 22.2% of the current population is non-Maltese – a fivefold increase of the foreign population since 2011 when it stood at 4.9%. This suggests that more than one in every five residents is non-Maltese (National Statistics Office, 2022). UM is no different, where approximately 11% of administrative and academic staff are non-Maltese nationals and approximately 11% of the registered students are non-Maltese. These indicative numbers are evidence of a strong and deepening internationalisation and a campus community that remains predominantly local but increasingly global in terms of its research efforts, its networks, its reach and the citizenship and background of its staff and students.

The international students at UM are guided and supported by the **International Office (SD218)** which is entrusted with managing the University's international relations and the welfare of its international students.

7.3.20. Sports at UM

UM's vision on sport and physical activity is *"to make sport and physical activity a central component of the student experience and to encourage all the University community to be active for life."* Opportunities to participate in sport and increase physical activity levels are available to all students and staff. UM aims to increase participation levels by including a variety of sporting disciplines and activities.

7.3.20.1 Sports for students

Students at UM benefit from discounted fees for a number of sport facilities such as the National Pool Complex, football pitches, gym, squash courts and a sports hall which may be used for basketball, handball, badminton, volleyball and netball amongst others. Students studying at UM can also register for **extra optional units in sport (SD202)** as part of the DegreePlus initiative.

7.3.20.2. Student Athlete Support Programme (**SASP**) (**SD327**)

The Student Athlete Support Programme (SASP) was launched at the University of Malta following UM's participation in an Erasmus+ project with other European universities. The programme is aimed at supporting student-athletes studying at undergraduate level at UM whilst at the same time competing in a sporting discipline at national and/or international level. The ultimate aim is to provide student-athletes with the possibility of striking a balance between their academic and sporting commitments and consequently excel, to the best of their abilities, in both.

Selected student-athletes are assigned a sport mentor who is normally their first point of contact. The mentor would be able to assist with any matters the student-athlete may be concerned with throughout the course of their studies at UM. This includes matters of an academic and/or administrative nature such as clashes with international competitions and examinations, clashes of lectures with training, distribution of workload and time management.

7.3.20.3 Sports for staff

Like students, staff benefit from the free use of sport facilities during the University's normal operating hours. These include the use of the sports hall for basketball, handball, badminton, volleyball, squash, table tennis and netball. Discounted rates for the use of the Kinetika Gym and National Pool Complex are also available.

In addition, a number of opportunities to take part in organised sport events are also available. These include five-a-side football and volleyball tournaments. UM staff are also encouraged to participate in sporting events organised by the Malta Employees Sports Association (MESA) and which include, among others, athletics, football, and tennis.

Through the **Institute for Physical Education and Sport (IPES) (SD170)**, staff are given the opportunity to learn a new sport, improve their skills, and meet new people. Interested members of staff may discover the joy of playing, learning a new skill, meeting new people, getting active and having fun through participation in their selected sport discipline.

7.3.20.4. The Malta University Sports Club (**MUSC**) (**SD328**)

The MUSC organises sport and fitness activities and events for students. These include the Inter-Faculty Football Tournament and the annual Sports Fest, both very popular with students.

7.3.21. Student handbook

FICS are encouraged to publish student handbooks in order to assist and support students throughout their academic journey at UM. In order to assist FICS and facilitate this task, a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) along with a suitable template for the handbook has been developed by the QSU and is available **online (SD329)**. The SOP recommends a number of sections that would be worth including for the benefit of students and it has been shared with FICS Managers through a presentation which also included information about UM's QA mechanisms and quality culture.

7.3.22. Students' stipends

The **Students' Maintenance Grant (SD330)** is a scheme provided by the Government of Malta for students in Further and Higher Education. This scheme operates under a set of regulations, guidelines, and the respective Legal Notice, namely Subsidiary Legislation 605.06. Stipends are paid periodically in backdated four-weekly payments. Furthermore, a one-time grant allowance is credited directly to the students' bank account at the beginning of the academic year to be utilised for the purchase of textbooks and other educational material.

7.3.23. Broadening the Higher Education experience

DegreePlus (SD198) is a University initiative that recognises that the University years are an important period in one's lifetime for personal growth and development. DegreePlus provides an exciting and diverse range of opportunities to help students broaden their academic and non-academic horizons. The areas covered by DegreePlus include voluntary work, entrepreneurship, sport, culture and heritage, languages, music, creative and performing arts and many more. The students who actively engage in extracurricular activities on and off campus have their work recognised in their University transcript and DegreePlus certificate. There really is something for everyone!

7.3.24. The English Communicative Aptitude (ECA)

The **English Communicative Aptitude (ECA) (SD370)** programme was designed and coordinated by the Centre for English Language Proficiency (CELP) in order to equip students attending UM with an enhanced competence in the English language. The programme targets students' needs for better transferability of skills, enables them to successfully complete their course of study, and increases their opportunities for future mobility. Throughout the duration of this 12 ECTS programme, students are provided with a safe space in which to take risks while experimenting with their linguistic skills.

Effective oral and written communication is considered one of the key areas dominating twenty-first century education. Clarity and conciseness are at the core of effective communication, and these are some of the key skills that are directly addressed by the programme through continuous targeted practice until mastery is achieved.

7.4. Conclusion

Through the above-mentioned practices and procedures, the University of Malta believes that all its students have adequate access to the necessary learning resources to engage with their programmes of study. A solid learning infrastructure is in place, particularly as regards the services offered by the Library and IT Services, to support current and future developments in learning and teaching. Holistic support is provided to students hailing from diverse backgrounds and with varying needs. Furthermore, UM staff is appropriately qualified and is offered training opportunities to further strengthen their professional development for the benefit of students. Therefore, UM is confident that it not only meets the requirements and expectations of this Standard, but it actually exceeds them with its well-established systems and clearly implemented approach.

Proposals for further development

Library

- Due to the unforeseeable circumstances brought about by COVID-19, the Library had to transfer the Health Sciences Library's collection located at Mater Dei Hospital to the Library Basement. The collection has been re-organised and students requiring material from this collection can forward a request, following which Library staff will identify the publications and students will be informed to collect the requested items from the Circulation Desk at the Main Library. This situation is very cumbersome owing to the fact that the Collection cannot be made available for students to browse. Moreover, medical students have lost precious study spaces which were available at the Health Sciences Library within Mater Dei Hospital. To this effect, the Library needs to be provided with adequate space to re-establish the Health Science Library.
- Subsequent to ongoing requests made by students, as well as practices employed within foreign academic institutions, the Library strongly recognises the need to implement a 24/7 study area. To this effect, the Library Basement was identified as an appropriate premises to implement this initiative. However, due to space limitations within UM, the premises have not been handed over to the Library as yet – thus impeding the Library from moving forward with this project.
- Throughout the past few years, the Library was the recipient of considerable legacy and prestigious collections which were donated or bequeathed by scholars of repute, while other potential researchers are keen to donate/bequeath their collections. Moreover, owing to the fact that the Library is enhancing the visibility of these unique and valuable collections, requests by researchers to consult and access these collections have increased exponentially. To this effect, the need to secure the necessary funding to reconfigure a designated area to an Archives & Rare Books Section, which will include a Reading Hall and appropriate storage environments and facilities in line with international standards, is of paramount importance.

IT Services

- The core services offered by the UM **IT Services** are similar to those offered by universities elsewhere.
- With limited human resources, IT Services has implemented the IT systems/services mentioned in the UM Self-Assessment Report (2015, p.33–34). The Lecture Capture (Panopto) service is now available in a number of learning spaces and all academics can also use this software to record lectures on their laptops. The virtual classroom software (Zoom) is available through the Virtual Learning Environment and accessible through users' devices and from dedicated learning spaces around campus. The automated marking of multiple-choice assessments can be catered for by the WISEflow digital assessment platform. IT Services concluded a pilot of an open-source e-portfolio software based on the *Mahara* platform. Based on feedback received from academics, we will not be implementing *Mahara*. We are currently supporting departments to make use of Google Sites as an e-portfolio system.
- IT Services ensures that all the mainstream services offered to the university community are of a high standard in terms of technology robustness and the ongoing support. The IT Services team is always keen to expand its services and embrace new technologies to support the academic, research and business requirements of the University. There are human resource challenges, however, that must be addressed to sustain/expand the current services. The talent and skills required by IT Services are scarce and the salaries offered by UM are not competitive.

Student support services

- Improving communication channels with internal stakeholders, including students, is one of the main gaps in student support services. A number of services still do not have a dedicated office and/or adequate administrative support. Consequently, overarching funding is key.
- The need to review the Cottonera Resources Centre (CRC) is necessary in view of a governmental commitment to open similar outposts in other communities. The Chair of the CRC reported: *"It is rather dowdy in terms of having people accessing UM courses and programmes. To my knowledge UM has never studied the impact of this entity and what it has contributed to UM in terms of research data, increased or not in UM (including JC) student intake and improved or not relationship with the communities. It seems that the role of the CRC is that of trying to localise the differential distribution of stakeholders that form the community which might find it rather difficult to connect with UM – however I feel that CRC has struggled in this respect especially in these last years, a situation compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic and infrastructural problems"*. Reaching out to vulnerable groups and under-represented socio-economic groups remains a work in progress.
- UM is currently exploring the possibility of collating information about all the student support services into one institutional handbook which is easily accessible and perhaps included in the *My UM* app.

STANDARD 8: INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

MFHEA EQA 2015 Judgement

UM requires improvement to meet the Standard

**MFHEA EQA 2015
Recommendations**

- UoM should develop a comprehensive set of management information for the effective management of their programmes.
- The entities of UoM should systematically collect data on student withdrawal – including on the evaluation of the reasons for drop-out. They should use this analysis as a basis for necessary enhancement.
- UoM needs to develop a culture of transparency in relation to the analysis and dissemination of results of data analysis.

UM Response (What policies, procedures, systems are currently in place to meet this Standard)

The University of Malta has been steadily working to establish and improve its approach to information collection, analysis, use and dissemination. Currently, UM has two effective information management systems through which staff and students' data and information are managed. These are:

SIMS – the **Student Information Management System (SD294)** is a comprehensive software suite used to record and manage student data which is relevant to the students' study-period at the University.

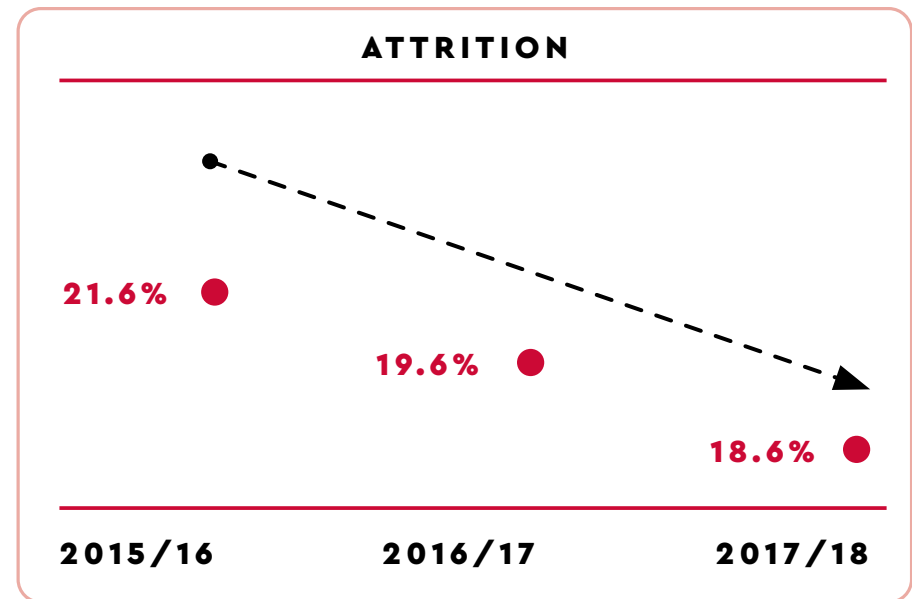
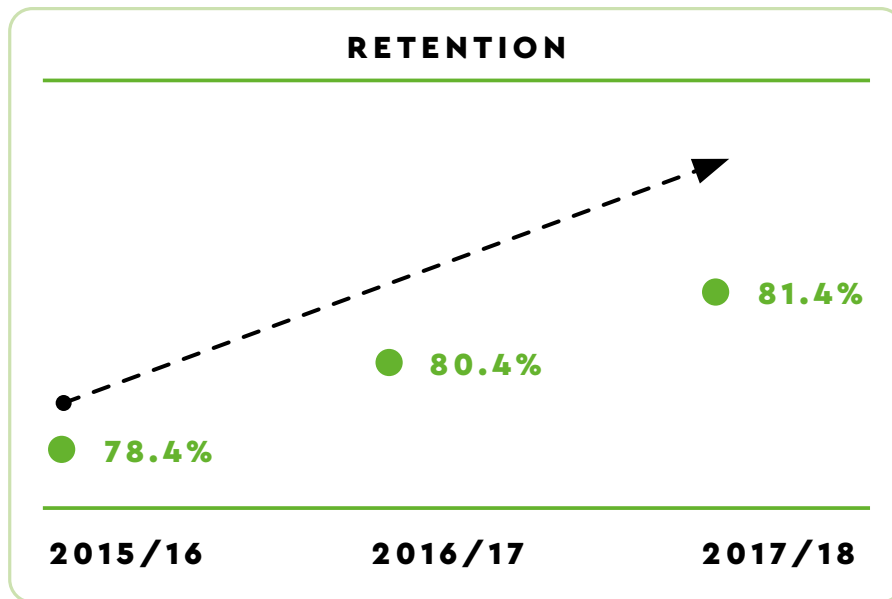
AIMS – the **Administrative Information Management System (SD332)** is an integrated Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) solution designed for service-based organisations such as the University of Malta that need financial accounting and other back-office software integrated with a broader range of core business functions in a single unified system. AIMS is utilised for operational support and strategic management across an impressive range of business core functions including:

- financial management
- procurement management
- human resources and payroll
- project management

- budget management and control
- reports and analytics
- business process automation.

Both SIMS and AIMS are working properly to maintain, retain and archive students' records and to inform decision-making processes related to students' academic and academic-support services. The following is an example of student data that can be easily extracted from the systems and which was exhibited in the UM profile submitted to the MFHEA in November 2022:

ATTRITION AND RETENTION RATES



* Undergraduate degree courses followed on a full-time basis calculated on students commencing their studies in the academic years 2015/16, 2016/17 and 2017/18.

Information management is a critical function within the University of Malta and the management and maintenance of the students' data is essential in order to ensure the smooth running of the institution. The Registrar is responsible for students' data which is collected and stored in compliance with the GDPR (Regulation (EU) 2016/679) and the Data Protection Act (Chapter 586, Laws of Malta). The Office of the Registrar ensures that all relevant information is accurately recorded, easily accessible, and secure.

The University of Malta makes use of the Student Information Management System (SIMS) software managed by Tribal Group. It helps the University manage various aspects of students' data and processes. At the start of a student journey a physical file is also created which is initially kept at the respective Faculty, Institute, Centre or School (FICS) in a locked filing cabinet. Once students complete their studies, the file is then transferred to the University's archives in a secured location.

Every employee who handles or has access to student data is required to sign a declaration on the ethical handling of student data. Access levels for SIMS depend on the role and requirements of the individual member of staff and access is granted once a member of staff activates their UM IT account and attends the relevant training sessions.

Both UM students and staff have access to the eSIMS portal which feeds data directly to and from SIMS and provides facilities for:

- students to view their personal information, study-unit registrations and results
- academic members of staff to send emails to students and print reports
- administrative members of staff to manage / update student records online.

The University of Malta collects personal students' data at admission stage and yearly during enrolment. This is done through online applications/forms/tasks. Students can access their data via an online task through their eSIMS portal. The personal data requested by the University of Malta is collected within the parameters of the University's authority as an educational institution acting in the public interest in terms of, and in accordance with, the **Education Act** (Chapter 327 of the Laws of Malta) (**SD018**).

Administrative members of staff are able to retrieve data through various database reporting tools in order to check and analyse data. Various user guides are available to staff in order to assist them in the processing of student-related records. Training sessions are also provided to administrative members of staff in relation to crucial tasks in order to ascertain that the work is carried out as expected. Furthermore, administrative staff assists management, Deans/Directors/Heads of Schools and Heads of Departments by providing reports and statistical data. The University of Malta believes that evidence-based decision-making is crucial and essential in the decision-making processes.

Data snapshots are taken monthly to allow the University to capture and maintain historical data from reports. These snapshots contain data on selected transaction data tables at a specific point in time. Snapshots help UM, the Government and other stakeholders who request such data for analysis.

Data maintenance plays a crucial part in sustaining a functioning database. Data maintenance is routinely performed in order to ensure that the data is as accurate as possible and up-to-date. This task is taken very seriously in order to provide the most precise information in the form of statistics and reports. Over the years, a number of data maintenance reports have been designed in order to assist users, enabling them to correct any incorrect information. Routine checks are performed regularly by staff within the central administration and the FICS administrative staff in order to ensure that the data is correct and complete.

8.1. Data security and disaster recovery

The SIMS Office liaises closely with IT Services who are responsible for UM's IT infrastructure. The SIMS Structured Query Language (SQL) is set up with Synchronous replication/High-Availability, at a Secondary Data Centre (SDC), running on compute/storage systems independent from the main cluster. Furthermore, UM's SDC is located in a separate building on campus. It is fed from a different substation, has its own Uninterruptible Power Supply (UPS) and generator, separate fibre links to the rest of the campus buildings, as well as backup connection to the internet. This ensures that there is no hardware that can be a single point of failure, and ensures the latest SQL data is always available. A username and private access password are given to each person who has access to the computer network, student information management systems, and email system.

8.2. Collection and monitoring of student and programme data

Programme reviews are held periodically and are aimed at achieving a number of objectives including:

- assessment of the quality of the student experience and identification of areas for improvement
- reviewing feedback from students, staff, external examiners, professional bodies and other external stakeholders.

During this exercise the Board of Studies reviews and analyses student profiles including age, gender, full-time and part-time status. Furthermore, it considers progression and attrition rates, based on the percentage of those enrolled who are subsequently successful at each stage of the programme. In addition to this, alumni are contacted in order to identify:

- what kind of employment graduates of the particular programme access upon completing the programme
- what career paths students have chosen and their career progression
- whether the knowledge and skills acquired during the programme are sufficient for the professional role concerned
- whether any students create their own enterprise
- what proportion of students proceed to further studies and what proportion is unemployed.

Following this exercise, the Board is requested to compile a self-evaluation document which is to be presented to the FICS Board. This is done so that the merit and worth of the report and programme is evaluated.

8.3. Student surveys

8.3.1. Study-Unit evaluation

The University aims to offer the best possible environment and learning experience to its students, in order to enable them to perform at their full potential. Students play a critical role in the evaluation, development and enhancement of the quality of this learning experience. Feedback from students allows the University to evaluate how its service provision is perceived by its most important group of stakeholders, i.e. its students. Besides providing students with an opportunity to comment on the quality of the learning and teaching environment at the University, feedback ensures that academic members of staff and Boards of Studies are made aware of problems encountered by students, and provides an opportunity for self-evaluation and revision, where necessary.

The outcome/results of the study-unit feedback are presented to the Dean, Head of Department and academic members of staff and when areas for improvement are identified the academic member of staff concerned is asked to indicate the action to be taken. Whilst every suggestion is valuable, the importance of statistical significance cannot be overlooked. It is for this reason that all students within a cohort are strongly encouraged to submit their feedback.

The study-unit feedback survey is conducted twice a year through a questionnaire which consists of 17 close-ended questions and a free-text section which allows students to submit any further comments. Feedback can be submitted either before or after the assessments are held via the My UM app or the students' eSIMS portal.

8.3.2. End-of-programme feedback

The end-of-programme survey is a quality assurance tool that provides information about students' learning experience throughout the programme. The data gathered feeds into the Annual and Periodic Programme Review and is used to improve existing programmes.

For the purpose of this exercise, SurveyMonkey is used to gather feedback from students. End-of-programme feedback is received following the publication of the students' final classification to the graduation period.

Through the end-of-programme survey, the University is able to assess the quality of the learning experience of the students and whether students feel prepared for the world of work.

Graduands who complete the questionnaire are anonymous as they are not required to disclose their names or any other personal details at any stage. The reports which are generated through SurveyMonkey do not include any personal details and feedback cannot be traced back to the particular student.

Results are compiled into reports which are then sent to Deans/Directors of the respective FICS and Heads of Departments. Suggestions to improve programmes are considered during meetings of Boards of Studies and are discussed during the Annual and Periodic Programme Review.

Student representation on various boards and committees, both at FICS and institutional level also facilitate student input, feedback, and conversation.

8.3.3. Tracer studies

The University of Malta is presently working on a tracer study at institutional level in order to collect data on its graduates including their university experience, the skills learned and quality of instruction and how this relates to employability. This will provide feedback on whether the University is providing the right skills to its students.

8.3.4. Alumni

Students join our alumni network after successfully completing their studies and receiving their final award classification. Our alumni network's primary goal is to facilitate and sustain networking on a personal and professional level and to instil a personal and business long-lasting relation.

8.4. PHRR – the Programme Human Resource Requirements

Aiming to continuously improve its services and activities, and following the External Quality Assurance audit report (2015), the Quality Assurance Committee explored a Business Intelligence (BI) solution initiative. BI was considered to be the key technology that would allow the University of Malta to understand, take decisions and act on the information received from, and stored in, several sources. The BI initiative is believed to consolidate and further enhance the University's arrangements for the systematic collection, analysis and evaluation of key information about its students and staff. This smooth and robust process will inform the University's decision-making in planning and managing academic and academic-support services related to students and staff. A pilot project was undertaken in 2015 that included the Office for Human Resources Management & Development and the Admissions Department within the Office of the Registrar. The study was conducted by the Department of Computer Information Systems (Faculty of ICT) to evaluate three leading products that could be used as part of a broader BI strategy.

The pilot project was designed as part of a group project given to students following the software development programme. The students were asked to liaise with the representatives of the departments to gather a set of requirements for a sample BI project. Through research, three products (Microsoft Power BI, QlikView and Tableau) were identified for the pilot.

Evaluation of the tools was accomplished by creating identical dashboards in each product. The dashboards were previously agreed upon by the students and the UM participants as part of the pilot project. The evaluation of the products was based on the ease with which the dashboards could be set up, the level of interaction that would enable a non-technical employee to benefit from the information provided in the dashboards, the technical difficulties encountered to set up a working system and finally the quality of the visualisations that could be produced. Two reports for the **HRMD (SD376)** and **Office of the Registrar (SD377)** were generated at the end of the project and Microsoft Power BI was found to provide the best features and usability for the cost involved.

After a period of internal consultation, a decision was taken to use Microsoft Power BI as the primary BI tool for this quality improvement initiative early in 2020. Key performance indicators (KPIs) were to be identified by senior management so as to establish the relevant technical requirements for the BI reports to be created and implemented. From an organisational perspective, the AIMS Office was tasked to lead this initial phase to design, create and implement BI reports in accordance with KPIs.

In the interim period, that is to say, until KPIs were established, members from the AIMS Office attended online Power BI courses to become acquainted with the software and its methodologies. This was followed by a number of meetings with key stakeholders within the HR department to identify a small number of BI reports that would assist this department with their daily reporting duties. Priority was given to the identified gaps that would make a considerable difference, and hence improve the department's efficiency. Thanks to this initiative, certain reports that would have taken a number of man-hours to produce and verify, are now being created at the press of a button.

Following the successful implementation of the above-mentioned HR BI reports, another pilot project focusing on academic resourcing and study-units was initiated. This effort was led by the Activity-Based Costing Office within the Finance Office in close collaboration with the AIMS Office. SIMS Office within the Office of the Registrar produced a number of views that were needed while IT Services were also brought in to provide a simple data warehouse for this project. The main requirement of this effort was to create reports that would aid HR, FICS and the University as a whole to identify areas where the current academic effort being provided was either too low or too high, hence improving visibility and creating a tool that would aid in decision-making and efficient resource allocation processes. This project included three main data sources:

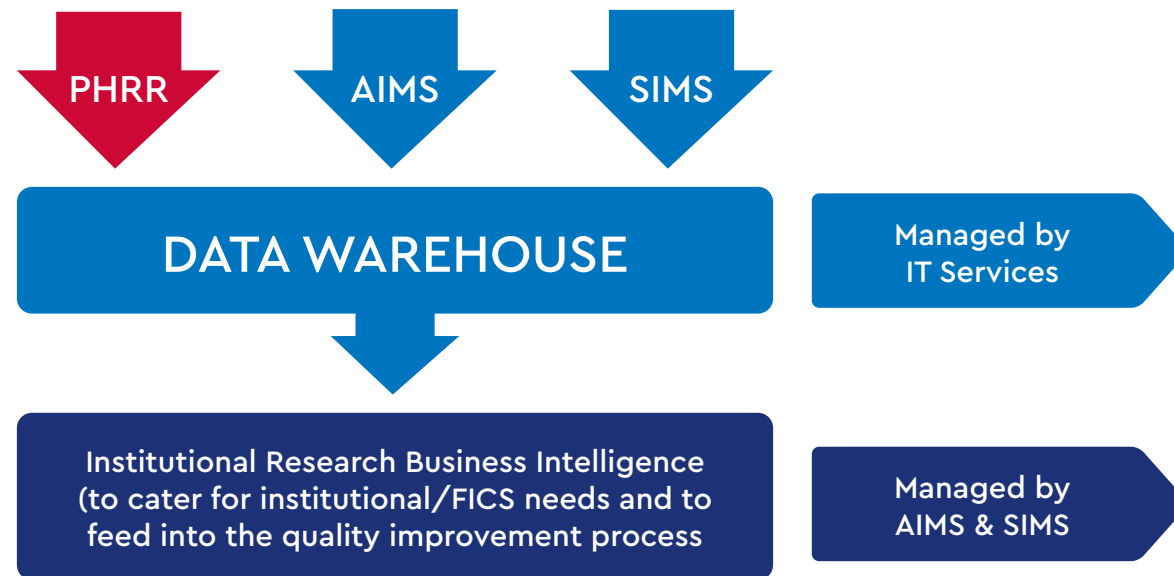
1. AIMS / Agresso Business World (Human Resources records)
2. SIMS (Student and study-unit records)
3. PHRR (Academic Efforts allocated to various study-units)

A number of BI reports were eventually developed to replace existing manual reports. With the use of Power BI, these reports are now being created in much less time and with far less effort when compared to the previous situation and considerable improvements have been made in comparison to the previous scenario.

The COVID-19 pandemic has pushed back the implementation of BI at UM. On the other hand, AIMS Office staff are now more knowledgeable of the BI tool and can provide a valid contribution to the further development, use and implementation of the respective BI reports in line with the identified KPIs.

During the academic year 2021/2022 the QAC revamped its ongoing monitoring and evaluation policy and procedures in relation to the academic programmes. This called for metrics or tools that are able to feed in data and inform quality improvement. As a starting point, the QAC established a set of KPIs which would continuously develop according to UM's and FICS' quality assurance data and research needs. This would further expand upon the work already implemented by the Finance Office and extend to a centralised BI system for various institutional purposes.

The action plan for implementation is exhibited in the figure below.



The QAC is driving the action plan by bringing together key players, as a core group, in the implementation plan. Since September 2022 this core working group has started meeting once every two weeks to work collaboratively towards achieving a comprehensive and centralised BI system. The core group acknowledged that unless data information management is organised, processed and available to the right person in a format that facilitates understanding, this would ultimately become a burden, cease to be beneficial and could jeopardise quality improvement. The overall aim and scope for a BI system would be to assist the University of Malta, as the leading research-intensive Higher Education Institution (HEI) in Malta in:

- continuous quality enhancement through data-driven decision-making
- supporting and monitoring quality academic and operational processes
- obtaining global recognition of the quality of its educational provision in international rankings
- enriching institutional research.

Currently, the BI project is in the pilot stage with seven FICS being involved in the BI information sessions and capacity-building programmes. Positive feedback has so far been received from the participants. Upon the successful implementation of the pilot stage, the BI project will be mandatory for all the FICS at UM. It is believed that the implementation of the BI system will be a considerable improvement for the data and information management at the University.

8.5. Conclusion

Since the EQA visit in 2015, UM has taken steps to improve the quality of its data collection and has set up a working group to take this forward. This included the use of pilots to test out new approaches and systems which led to some successes along the way, for example in the area of human resources. UM is on an ongoing journey to further develop its approach to the use of data and information management in order to enhance the effective management of its academic programmes and support quality assurance. UM has a clear way forward in this regard which will include the use of dashboards by FICS and staff trained to analyse and interpret the data and its use at the local level to sustain continuous enhancement.

Having established its approach to data and information collection, analysis and dissemination and identified the probable areas for further enhancement, UM believes that it successfully meets the requirements this Standard. The University is confident that significant progress has been recorded to effectively collect, analyse and use relevant information to manage its different programmes and activities. Student data and records are maintained, retained and archived adequately. There are various methods of information collection and analysis which inform the University's decision-making process.

Proposals for further development

In adherence to its comprehensive quality management system and internal quality audits and as part of its self-reflection and continuous improvement approach, UM is to sustain and support the BI core group in any way possible to further develop the BI system and maintain the current momentum. The University needs to have an action plan on how it is to replace the current PHRR. In the longer-term vision, UM needs to establish a BI Unit which will serve to monitor and enhance quality in its educational provision and consequently lead to enrich institutional research and improve global recognition.

STANDARD 9: PUBLIC INFORMATION

MFHEA EQA 2015 Judgement

UM requires improvement to meet the Standard

MFHEA EQA 2015
Recommendations

- UoM should improve the mechanism which ensures that information on the Internet is up-to-date and accurate and which defines who is responsible for the content and accuracy of information uploaded.
- Learning outcomes, assessment procedures and teaching methods need to be included in the description of all courses.
- UoM should ensure comprehensive completion of the template for the item "Course Information" which covers all requirements necessary for a comprehensive description of a course according to Standard 9.

UM Response (What policies, procedures, systems are currently in place to meet this Standard)

9.1. Public information at UM

The University of Malta manages and publishes accurate, up-to-date and readily accessible information about its various activities, including programmes, study-units and student support services. Moreover, UM's website provides clear information on the University's key documents related to governance, regulations, admissions and strategic goals. The information available offers guidance in a range of formats and is sufficient for current and prospective students. It supports applicants to make an informed choice about the programme they intend to enrol in. Also, the general public can easily explore the published information and stay updated on UM's activities and events.

Over the past five years, UM has strengthened its **Marketing, Communications & Alumni Office (MCAO) (SD333)** which now employs two designers, two videographers and two content creators who prepare all the necessary content for use by the University. As a first step, UM has prepared a detailed **brand manual (SD334)** which outlines the correct use of the UM logo and its sub-brands. In addition, a number of resources have been made available to all members of staff (including PowerPoint presentation templates, posters, etc.). This ensures that UM's message is coherent and easily recognisable as belonging to the institution.

The current website has also been upgraded and students/staff now have the possibility of downloading the My UM app which provides access to a number of services including an alert whenever a new result is published. This app also allows the institution to communicate important information to students and staff via a push notification.

UM's communication channels have steadily evolved over recent years with the introduction of social media channels (**Facebook (SD335)**, **Twitter (SD336)**, **Instagram (SD337)**, **LinkedIn (SD338)** and **YouTube (SD339)**). The University is now present on all these platforms, ensuring that students have a wide range of communication tools in order to stay in touch with what is happening at UM. In the same vein, MCAO has introduced guidelines for the proper use of social media channels and a consolidation exercise has been undertaken to strengthen the presence of Facebook pages managed by FICS. Training programmes on the proper use of social media channels are regularly delivered by members of MCAO (in conjunction with HR).

Furthermore, the Marketing, Communications & Alumni Office is responsible for the compilation of the popular weekly **Newspoint (SD340)** update. This mailshot is sent to all students and staff and includes a number of articles that featured on the Newspoint portal the previous week. In fact, Newspoint can be considered as the official news portal of the University as it provides information on the latest events on campus.

Additionally, a number of digital screens are strategically placed all over campus displaying information that is relevant to students and staff including new programmes and public lectures.

The MCAO is responsible for all marketing activities and the recently set-up Student Recruitment Office is specifically tasked with promoting the institution to international students. Digital marketing campaigns are conducted throughout the year to entice prospective EU and non-EU students to consider choosing UM as their preferred institution for an undergraduate or postgraduate degree.

Every year, the MCAO outlines a marketing strategy for promoting UM both locally and abroad. Locally, UM has invested in street billboards, radio adverts and Google adverts to promote its programmes of study. Overseas, UM has subscribed to a number of services promoting universities together with a network of study agents who promote UM in specific countries/regions. International applications have increased year on year and at the beginning of academic year 2022/23, UM has registered close to 1,400 international students hailing from 123 countries.

Every programme of study at UM is validated and this is governed by SOP **ZAP-001 (SD341)** (Validation of New Programmes). There is also an additional SOP **ZAR-006 (SD342)** on the compilation of the prospectus which UM publishes on a bi-annual basis and which is also available via the website. The compilation of content is conducted by the Office of the Registrar whereas the design, layout and dissemination of the final product is done by the Marketing, Communications & Alumni Office.

In addition, any individual can access all programmes of study offered by UM through the **Course Finder (SD003)** feature. In each link, one finds all the relevant information including entry requirements and details of every module offered each year and the methods of assessment. This is by far one of the most comprehensive information systems that UM offers to its students whether current or potential.

All programmes of study that are offered by the University of Malta are made publicly available through the Course Finder facility which can be accessed from the University's main portal. The responsibility for populating the Course Finder facility lies with the Academic Programmes Quality & Resources Unit (APQRU), which is the administrative arm of the Programme Validation Committee (PVC), a committee appointed by

the Senate to ensure that the programmes of study on offer are comparable in standards and quality to similar programmes offered by other institutions of repute. The current operational procedure is one which guarantees that information pertaining to programmes of study is only published through this one source after this is approved by the relevant statutory bodies (the Senate following recommendations made by the PVC and the respective FICS Boards). This procedure further ensures that any subsequent changes/updates are processed through the same channels.

Populating the Course Finder requires APQRU staff to liaise with various stakeholders namely:

- **Managers in charge of FICS:** responsible for forwarding recommendations made by the FICS Boards in relation to new programmes of study and revisions to existing programmes; identifying the target audience; and providing details pertaining to career opportunities and access to further studies;
- the **Programme Validation Committee:** responsible for ensuring that the intended programme learning outcomes are reflective of the proposed level of study as defined in the Referencing Report and the Dublin Descriptors; that the programme entry requirements enable participants to follow the programme with profit; that the methods of delivery and assessment are aligned with the learning outcomes for the individual study-units; that the recommended readings are current and reflective of developments in the proposed area of study; and that the proposed programme structure is in line with the University's General Regulations;
- the **Admissions & Records Office:** responsible for updating the list of programmes which are to be offered for commencement during a particular student intake period;
- the **SIMS Office:** responsible for the maintenance of the Student Information Management System (SIMS) database which is the only source of data from which the Course Finder facility retrieves information pertaining to the study-units on offer during a particular academic year;
- the **Finance Office:** responsible for updating applicable course fees.

A sample of the information which is available to students under each search result can be found [here \(SD343\)](#).

A **Web Editorial Board (SD068)** is tasked with disseminating good practices for the UM website and its use by the various FICS. This also serves to assure that information available to the public is timely and accurate.

9.2. Conclusion

UM has made huge strides in this standard since the EQA audit in 2015 as evidenced through the rebranding process and also through the upgrading of UM's website. Eventually, UM is confident that it publishes information about its activities, including programmes and study-units, which is clear, accurate, objective, up-to-date and readily accessible. The University's approach in this regard is well-established in a way that guarantees the successful fulfilment of all the requirements of this Standard.

Proposals for further development

In adherence to its comprehensive quality management system and internal quality assurance audits and as part of its self-reflection and continuous improvement approach, UM is planning to further enhance its evaluation procedures and checks to ensure that public information is accurate and instantly updated. For instance, the University intends to consult students about the usefulness of the information provided through the various communication channels and platforms of the University. In this vein, the University aims to ameliorate its approach to the systematic maintenance of programme-level information. UM staff will be encouraged and supported to stay familiar with their responsibilities for regular checking of accuracy of the published information related to their programmes.

STANDARD 10: ONGOING MONITORING AND PERIODIC REVIEW OF PROGRAMMES

MFHEA EQA 2015 Judgement

UM requires improvement to meet the Standard

MFHEA EQA 2015
Recommendations

- The procedure for review needs to be revised, together with the procedure for approval of programmes, to make them more complementary, harmonized, and lean.
- Special attention should be given in the self-evaluation document to structured and systematic feedback from students, alumni, employers and other stakeholders.
- The procedure needs to be revised and strengthened as currently it leaves an element of lenient flexibility between the findings of the Stakeholders' Committee and the final conclusions submitted to the Senate.
- An example of good practice should be provided to help Faculties in using self-evaluation as a productive means to review and improve programmes.
- Feedback from students on study-unit information needs to be extracted to lead to discussion and proposals for improvement at the Boards of Study, which eventually scales up the discussion in Faculties and Institutes.
- Student representatives need to be involved actively in this process, and they ought to receive feedback about actions taken to improve the programme.
- There need to be clear guidelines as to how self-evaluation reports by academic staff feed into the process of programme review.

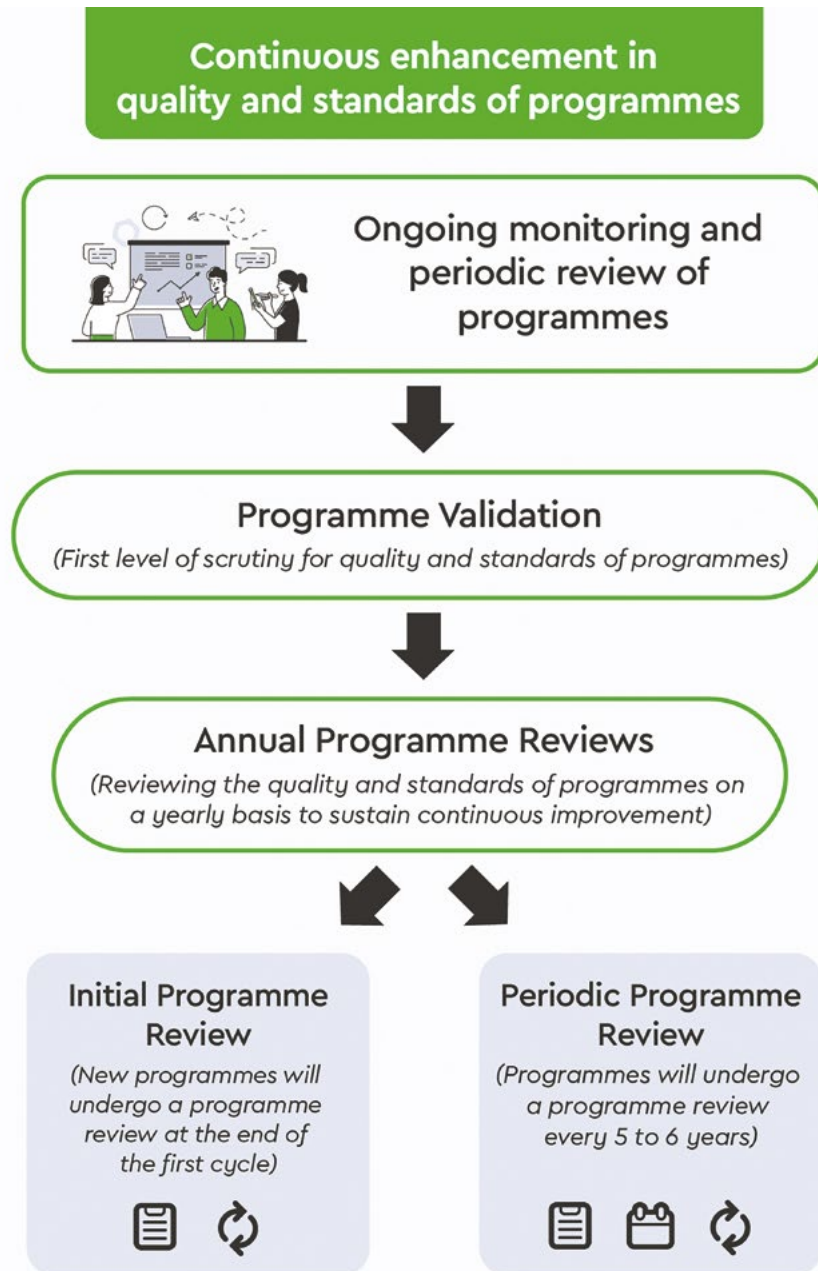
UM Response (*What policies, procedures, systems are currently in place to meet this Standard*)

The University of Malta has a well-established quality cycle for the ongoing monitoring and periodic reviews of programmes. The separate yet complementary quality assurance processes take into consideration the feedback from internal stakeholders such as students and staff, and from external stakeholders such as persons from the world of work, industry and/or academics or researchers who specialise in the particular field of study. Feedback originating from various external sources such as External Reviewers, External Examiners and the Stakeholders' Committee as part of the distinct processes are value added for the continuous enhancement in the quality and standards of programmes. The process identifies good practices and areas for improvement and further development of programmes as necessary.

10.1 A comprehensive internal quality assurance framework to monitor and review quality and standards in programmes

During the academic year 2021/2022 the **Quality Assurance Committee (SD061)** established a comprehensive internal quality assurance framework (see opposite) which guides and promotes continuous enhancement of quality and standards in all academic programmes. This framework was approved by the Senate on 10 March 2022. The aim is to streamline and bring together processes which were already in place and being implemented across UM into one established and agreed-upon framework, and which will further strengthen the current QA mechanisms.

Following on the Bologna Process and reflecting the **European Standards and Guidelines (ESG, 2015) (SD346)** which are replicated in the National Quality Assurance Framework for Further and Higher Education, the University of Malta, as a leading Higher Education Institution with self-accrediting status, has the primary responsibility for the quality of its provision and its assurance. This responsibility and commitment steered UM to further strengthen its QA framework.



This framework is based on a three-tier quality 'defence' system initiating at the programme validation stage, developing during Annual Programme Reviews within Faculties, Institutes, Centres and Schools (FICS) and ameliorating through the Periodic or Initial Programme Review.

10.1.1. Programme validation

UM is responsible for accrediting and validating all new taught programmes. Therefore, the first level of scrutiny for quality and standards of all programmes is triggered through **programme validation**. This is a key mechanism by which UM ensures that:

- the academic rationale for new programmes is explicit
- the requirements for students to achieve the intended learning outcomes are clear
- resources are available to deliver the programme to standards acceptable to UM.

The **validation process (SD223)**, which is explained in more detail in Standard 3, aims to ascertain that proposed programmes are in line with the University's overall vision and strategy, are responsive to market demands, and that their quality is comparable to that of our European and international counterparts. The procedure for the approval and validation of new programmes takes into consideration external stakeholders' feedback such as an independent external reviewer and is designed to be rigorous and effective, whilst also encouraging appropriate innovation.

The programme validation process falls under the responsibility of the **Programme Validation Committee (PVC) (SD204)** which is assisted in its task by the **Academic Programmes Quality & Resources Unit (APQRU) (SD205)**.

10.1.2. Annual Programme Review (APR)

Once an undergraduate and taught postgraduate programme is approved and its implementation begins, it is evaluated on an annual basis through an APR performed by Faculties, Institutes, Centres and Schools (FICS). The APR is UM's core process for the quality assurance and enhancement of learning, teaching and assessment.

Each FICS performs an annual programme review on the previous year's delivery of programmes which is then submitted to QAC/QSU. The APR includes plans for actions as a result of the review which will also serve to guide continuous enhancement. As a result of the APR, FICS can identify areas for improvement, plan achievable actions for continuous enhancement and highlight good practices. The APR aims to strengthen the link between quality enhancement and evaluation emanating from internal and external stakeholders' feedback.

The APR ensures that the University regularly and consistently reflects on the learning, teaching and assessment of programmes and how these impact the students' higher education experience. This process supports the University to meet the National Quality Assurance Framework for Further and Higher Education in Malta as required by **Subsidiary Legislation 607.03 (SD210)** and the **European Standards and**

Guidelines (2015) (SD346). Furthermore, it is a key characteristic of UM's commitment to continuously enhance the quality of its educational provision and to permeate a culture of quality among all members of its community.

The APR process is complemented by a more thorough Periodic Programme Review which is performed every five to six years as part of the University's ongoing monitoring and review of programmes and which builds on the APRs undertaken by each FICS. During the academic year 2021/2022, the QAC revised the **APR process (SD036)** and proposed a template for the APR to be used by FICS. The template has been discussed among QAC members, KSU representatives and a small focus group made up of Deans. The template guides FICS to focus on the analysis of qualitative and quantitative data to inform quality improvement. It also provides a structured and systematic process to collect and evaluate feedback from students, staff and external stakeholders such as external examiners and industry experts and which needs to be discussed at Board of Studies level to make informed decisions about any changes if required. This aims to steer critical reflection and serve as a good practice to guide FICS in using self-evaluation as a meaningful tool to review and improve programmes. The report template is submitted to the Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) through the Quality Support Unit (QSU). The report may also be submitted to the Programme Validation Committee (PVC) through the Academic Programmes Quality & Resources Unit (APQRU) in cases where revisions to existing programmes of study or changes to existing study-units are being proposed following review of the programme. This is implemented with intention so that quality enhancement is connected to evaluation. As a result of the APR, the FICS will be able to identify areas for improvement, plan achievable actions for continuous enhancement and highlight good practices. The newly proposed template was approved by the Senate in October 2022.

10.1.3. Periodic Programme Review

The **Periodic Programme Review (PPR) (SD206)** is an integral component of the University of Malta's internal QA. It is a rolling system of peer review, in which all academic programmes of UM are reviewed on a five- to six-year cycle. During the academic year 2021/2022, the QAC revamped the PPR policies and procedures which were approved by the Senate on 16 June 2022.

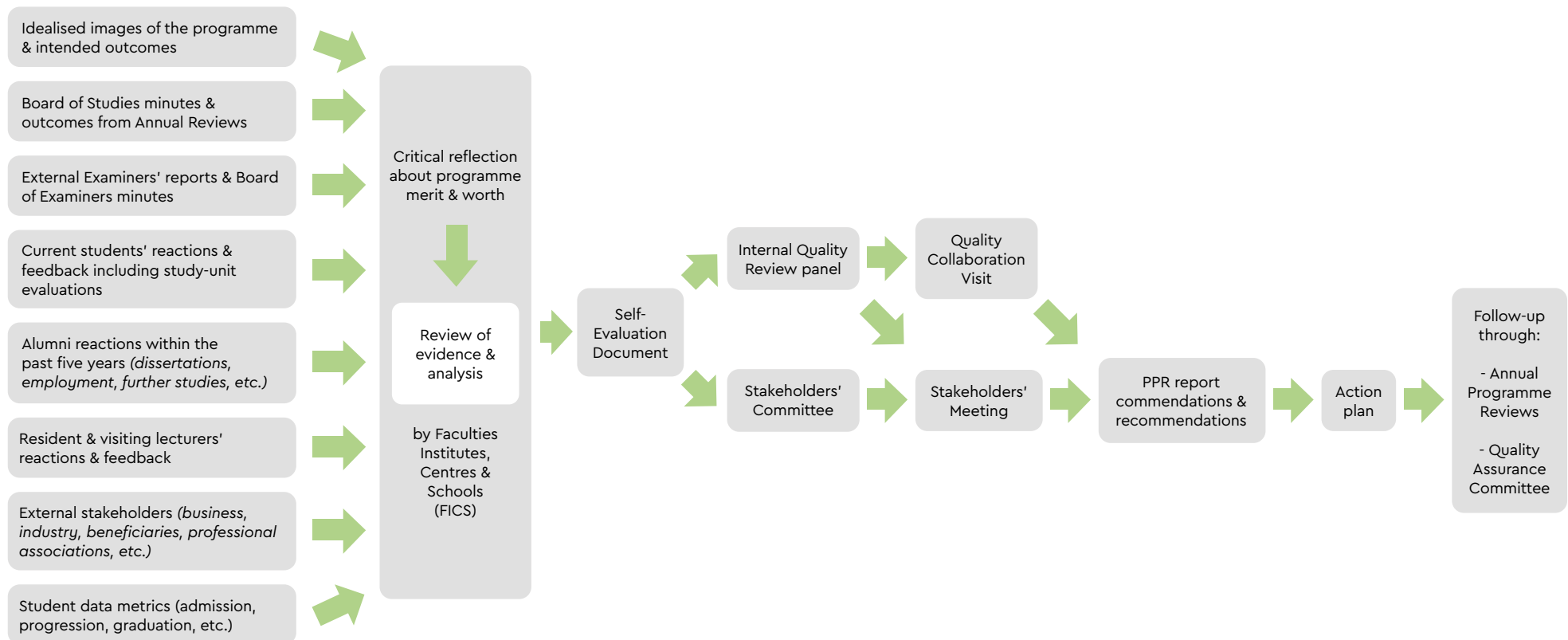
Institutional responsibility and pride inspire us to evaluate our research and taught programmes. This will lead to critical reflection of the relevance, appropriateness and utility of what we teach in relation to academic progress, the changing needs of the local economy as well as the global context in which the University exists. QA also provides a platform for continuous enhancement through both internal and external stakeholders' feedback which in turn contributes to improvements in content, learning outcomes, means of delivery, as well as mode/s of assessment.

The University of Malta's PPR process draws on Malta's National Quality Assurance Framework for Further and Higher Education (NCFHE, 2015) and adheres to Internal QA standards as well as the principle of "*ongoing monitoring and periodic review of programmes to ensure objectives are met and respond to the needs of the students and society*" (NCFHE, 2015). Underpinning the PPR process and a prerequisite for success is continuous enhancement as embodied by the quality cycle.

The **PPR (SD348)** is an evidence-based process that takes into consideration feedback from internal and external stakeholders. Review of evidence and analysis are complemented by critical reflection and exhibited in a **Self-Evaluation Document (SED) (SD356)** which is compiled by FICS. The SED is reviewed by the **Internal Quality Review (IQR) panel (SD237)** and discussed during the **Quality Collaboration Visit (SD357)**. The SED is also shared with the **Stakeholders' Committee (SD239)** and discussed during a **Stakeholders' Meeting (SD360)**. Both the visit and the meeting serve as a platform where professional dialogue about quality may ensue.

Outcomes from the SED, the Quality Collaboration Visit and the Stakeholders' meeting are analysed by the IQR panel who will compile a report that identifies commendations and recommendations. The PPR report will be discussed at FICS level who will have to agree on an action plan on how the recommendations may be addressed. The action plan will feed into the following academic year's Annual Programme Review and is followed up by the QAC through the QSU. This PPR process is exhibited in the diagram below.

Evidence-based continuous enhancement through the Periodic Programme Review (PPR) process



Following the External Quality Assurance audit report (2015), the QAC closed the first PPR cycle by the end of the academic year 2021/2022 and proposed a 5–6 year **PPR schedule (SD349)**, covering academic years from 2022/2023 to 2027/2028. FICS will be accordingly notified in advance of their upcoming PPR cycles, as the schedule is published online. This will facilitate FICS planning in relation to the APR which would feed in the PPR.

10.1.4. Initial Programme Review

New programmes will undergo an Initial Programme Review at the end of the first cycle. This process will build on the Periodic Programme Review policies and procedures.

10.2 Conclusion

Since the EQA audit in 2015, UM has developed further its quality assurance processes so that they are more complementary, harmonised and lean. The self-evaluation documents have been reviewed to ensure the systematic feedback from current students, alumni, employers and other stakeholders. The self-evaluation documents evidence the link between the APR and PPR which includes direct involvement of internal and external stakeholders. This will facilitate the process of closing the feedback loop.

In this way, UM ensures that it successfully plans and implements the quality cycle by monitoring and periodically reviewing its programmes in accordance with its published policies and procedures. The APR and PPR processes at the University clearly show that robust and appropriate arrangements are in place for the monitoring and periodic review of academic programmes to ensure that they are meeting the target objectives. This regular practice at UM involves all the stakeholders and makes sure students, employers, alumni and industry representatives actively participate. This approach constantly results in improvements to the current academic programmes. Therefore UM is confident that it meets the requirements of this Standard.

Proposals for further development

In adherence to its internal quality assurance framework for the ongoing monitoring and periodic review of programmes, UM is devoted to oversee the effective implementation of the APR and PPR process through the QAC and proposes the below further developments:

- disseminate and outreach of quality practices about the effective implementation of the APR and PPR processes
- promote continuous professional development on data-driven analysis, interpretation, evaluation and how to use this to inform quality enhancement
- promote the writing of effective and SMART action plans
- support the development of BI dashboards to provide easy access to data to inform the APR process

- support FICS in the APR process to further develop a quality culture that drives continuous enhancement
- a revamped QA webpage that informs internal and external stakeholders about the comprehensive internal quality assurance framework to monitor and evaluate quality and standards in programmes at UM
- explore foreign networking opportunities to increase capacity within QA among students and staff.

STANDARD 11: CYCLICAL EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE

MFHEA EQA 2015 Judgement

UM meets the Standard

MFHEA EQA 2015
Recommendations

- None

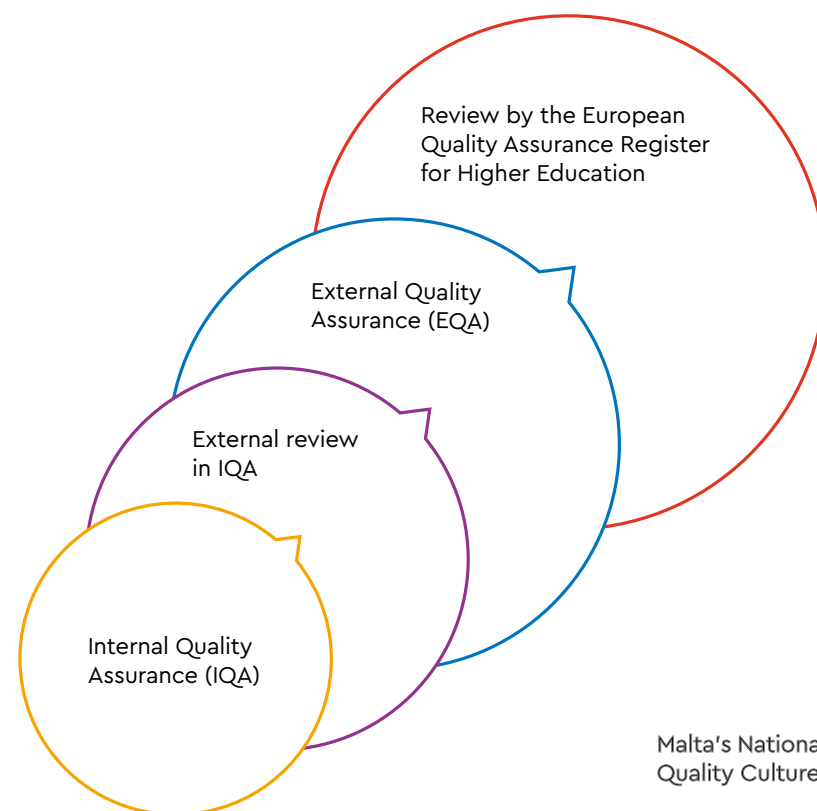
UM Response (What policies, procedures, systems are currently in place to meet this Standard)

11.1. Cyclical EQA at UM

The University of Malta embarked on the cyclical external quality assurance since 2015 under the auspices of the Malta Further & Higher Education Authority (MFHEA), previously known as the National Commission for Further & Higher Education (NCFHE). The MFHEA carried out its first External Quality Assurance Audits among the main public further and higher education institutions in Malta in 2015 following its launching of the **National Quality Assurance Framework for Further and Higher Education (SD209)**.

The University of Malta was the first Higher Education Institution to undergo an External Quality Assurance (EQA) audit in Malta. This was a **pilot (SD347)**, but fully-fledged external quality assurance audit and was undertaken within the context of an ESF-funded project in which the UM was a partner, namely ESF Project 1.227 'Making Quality Visible'. The MFHEA's EQA report (2015) is published **online (SD344)** and this was followed-up by a desk-based report in 2016 which is also available **online (SD345)**.

It is noteworthy that the UM Quality Assurance Committee invited Prof. Chris Haslam on **28 and 29 April 2016 (SD301)** to support its work. The **purpose (SD258)** for this visit was:



- To contribute to the raising of awareness of QA and quality culture in Higher Education
- To support the QAC in its first-year deliberations.

In this line of thought, believing in the importance of periodic EQA exercise and to fulfil its obligations in addressing the National Quality Assurance Framework for Further and Higher Education, the QAC, through the Quality Support Unit, sought a proposal from the **Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) (SD374)** International to conduct an institutional gap analysis of UM against the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) and the National Internal Quality Assurance Standards established by the MFHEA.

The proposal was discussed with and endorsed by the Rector, Prof. Alfred J Vella. A QAA panel conducted a gap analysis which offered the opportunity to analyse internal quality assurance systems and identify where further development and capacity-building were needed. The gap analysis was an opportunity for UM to critically evaluate the degree to which it was likely to meet the ten (Part I) ESGs and the National Quality Assurance Framework for Further and Higher Education.

The QAA panel reviewed UM through:

- A desk-based analysis of the self-assessment document submitted by UM
- A review visit (24 and 25 October 2022)
- A report on its findings (December 2022).

This exercise was beneficial for UM to identify current good practices and areas for further enhancement while discussing with professional experts on possibilities of how these areas may be addressed. UM intends to maintain this good practice of inviting international experts from well-known accreditation agencies to conduct regular EQA and to spread awareness on quality assurance and accreditation in higher education.

Apart from the MFHEA EQA and the QAA EQA, the University has previously been committed to externality in its IQA processes at various levels including the following:

- external examiner engagement on study-units
- external reviewer reports in the programme development and approval process
- external members of Boards of Studies (normally one from another higher education provider and one from an industry relevant to the discipline)
- external members of FICS Boards
- two nominees of the Ministry for Education on Senate
- one nominee of the Ministry for Education on Council and 14 nominees of the Prime Minister.

This approach of externality that necessitates the presence of recognised experts on the UM's boards, committees and governing bodies ensures the objectivity of the evaluation, provides critical judgement of the process, and determines how it compares to other similar processes in the country.

11.2. Conclusion

It is clear that UM has established an effective system for its internal and external quality assurance processes through the externality approach being implemented as well as the newly introduced initiative of inviting QAA reviewers to conduct EQA. This is in parallel with the MFHEA's ongoing EQA conducted in 2015 and scheduled for 2023. Therefore, UM is confident that it surpasses the requirements of this Standard as not only does it adhere to the MFHEA EQA, but it also willingly reaches out to renowned international quality assurance and accreditation agencies, such as the QAA, to conduct EQA at the UM.

Furthermore, the QAC agreed that it would be beneficial for UM to subscribe to the QAA's International Associate Membership. Such international membership aims to build an international community of higher education institutions committed to excellence in quality assurance and enhancement. The University of Malta looks forward to further enhancing its quality assurance credentials through the sharing of resources and best practices to support continuous improvement.

4. List of supporting documentation

SD Code	Description	Section
SD001	Link to 'The Bologna Process and the European Higher Education Area' webpage	Section 1: Introduction and overview
SD002	Link to UM's 'Research' webpage	Section 1: Introduction and overview
SD003	Link to UM's course finder	Section 1: Introduction and overview Standard 3 Standard 9
SD004	Link to UM's 'Vision, mission & values' webpage	Section 1: Introduction and overview
SD005	Link to UM's 'Strategic Plan' webpage	Section 1: Introduction and overview Standard 3 Standard 6
SD006	Link to UM's Strategic Theme 1 (Learning and Teaching) webpage	Section 1: Introduction and overview Standard 6
SD007	Link to UM's Strategic Theme 2 (Research & Knowledge Transfer) webpage	Section 1: Introduction and overview
SD008	Link to UM's Strategic Theme 3 (Societal Factors and Impact) webpage	Section 1: Introduction and overview
SD009	Link to UM's Strategic Theme 4 (Enterprise and Industry Impact) webpage	Section 1: Introduction and overview
SD010	Link to UM's Strategic Theme 5 (National Impact) webpage	Section 1: Introduction and overview
SD011	Link to UM's Strategic Theme 6 (International Outlook) webpage	Section 1: Introduction and overview
SD012	Link to UM's Strategic Theme 7 (Sustainability) webpage	Section 1: Introduction and overview
SD013	Link to UM's Strategic Theme 8 (Services and Administrative Support) webpage	Section 1: Introduction and overview

SD014	Link to the KSU's 'KSU Today' webpage	Section 1: Introduction and overview Standard 1
SD015	Link to the KSU's 'Gozo Liaison Officer' webpage	Section 1: Introduction and overview
SD016	Link to the KSU's 'Student Organisations' webpage	Section 1: Introduction and overview
SD017	Link to the KSU's 'Student Representatives' webpage	Section 1: Introduction and overview Standard 1
SD018	<i>Education Act</i> (Chapter 327 of the Laws of Malta)	Section 2: Governance, management & academic infrastructure Standard 1 Standard 2 Standard 3 Standard 7 Standard 8
SD019	Link to UM's 'Boards and Committees' webpage	Section 2: Governance, management & academic infrastructure
SD020	Link to UM's 'Academic Resources Funds Committee' webpage	Section 2: Governance, management & academic infrastructure
SD021	Link to UM's 'Administrative, Technical and Industrial Staff Work Resources Committee' webpage	Section 2: Governance, management & academic infrastructure
SD022	Link to University of Malta's 'Audit and Risk Committee' webpage	Section 2: Governance, management & academic infrastructure Standard 1
SD023	Link to UM's 'Board of Discipline for Administrative, Technical and Industrial Staff' webpage	Section 2: Governance, management & academic infrastructure

SD024	Link to UM's 'Committee for Council Rules of Procedure' webpage	Section 2: Governance, management & academic infrastructure
SD025	Link to UM's 'Committee to consider Extension of Appointments of Academic Staff' webpage	Section 2: Governance, management & academic infrastructure
SD026	Link to UM's 'Finance Committee' webpage	Section 2: Governance, management & academic infrastructure
SD027	Link to UM's 'Gender Equality and Sexual Diversity Committee' webpage	Section 2: Governance, management & academic infrastructure Standard 1 Standard 7
SD028	Link to UM's 'IT Services Committee' webpage	Section 2: Governance, management & academic infrastructure
SD029	Link to UM's 'Medical Board for University Members of Staff' webpage	Section 2: Governance, management & academic infrastructure
SD030	Link to UM's 'Safety Committee' webpage	Section 2: Governance, management & academic infrastructure
SD031	Link to UM's 'Shortlisting Committee for the appointment of Directors of Institutes/Centres/Schools' webpage	Section 2: Governance, management & academic infrastructure
SD032	Link to UM's 'Staff Affairs Committee' webpage	Section 2: Governance, management & academic infrastructure
SD033	Link to UM's 'Staff Scholarships and Bursaries Committee' webpage	Section 2: Governance, management & academic infrastructure
SD034	Link to UM's 'Student Affairs Committee (including travel grants, bursaries, scholarships)' webpage	Section 2: Governance, management & academic infrastructure
SD035	Link to UM's 'University House Liaison Committee' webpage	Section 2: Governance, management & academic infrastructure

SD036	Link to UM's 'Annual Programme Review' webpage	Standard 10
SD037	Link to UM's 'Academic Promotions Board A (Lecturers, Senior Lecturers and Junior College Academics)' webpage	Section 2: Governance, management & academic infrastructure
SD038	Link to UM's 'Academic Promotions Board B (Associate Professors and Professors)' webpage	Section 2: Governance, management & academic infrastructure
SD039	Link to UM's 'ACCESS Disability Support Committee' webpage	Section 2: Governance, management & academic infrastructure Standard 7
SD040	Link to UM's 'Committee for Research Engagement' webpage	Section 2: Governance, management & academic infrastructure
SD041	Link to UM's 'Committee for Safeguarding the Code of Professional Academic Conduct' webpage	Section 2: Governance, management & academic infrastructure
SD042	Link to UM's 'Committee for Sustainability at the University of Malta (C-SUM)' webpage	Section 2: Governance, management & academic infrastructure
SD043	Link to UM's 'Committee on Race and Ethnic Affairs' webpage	Section 2: Governance, management & academic infrastructure
SD044	Link to UM's 'Research Fund Committee' webpage	Section 2: Governance, management & academic infrastructure
SD045	Link to UM's 'University Equity Committee' webpage	Section 2: Governance, management & academic infrastructure Standard 7
SD046	Link to UM's 'University Honours Committee' webpage	Section 2: Governance, management & academic infrastructure

SD047	Link to UM's 'Visiting Lecturers and External Examiners Committee' webpage	Section 2: Governance, management & academic infrastructure Standard 4
SD048	Link to UM's 'Animal Welfare Committee' webpage	Section 2: Governance, management & academic infrastructure
SD049	Link to UM's 'Board to Review Reason for Absence from Assessments' webpage	Section 2: Governance, management & academic infrastructure
SD050	Link to UM's 'Committee for Students' Requests' webpage	Section 2: Governance, management & academic infrastructure
SD051	Link to UM's 'Committee for Student Societies' webpage	Section 2: Governance, management & academic infrastructure
SD052	Link to UM's 'Committee for the Implementation of the Students' Charter' webpage	Section 2: Governance, management & academic infrastructure
SD053	Link to UM's 'Committee of Discipline (regarding Students' Misconduct)' webpage	Section 2: Governance, management & academic infrastructure
SD054	Link to UM's 'Committee when students/applicants present a Police Conduct Certificate' webpage	Section 2: Governance, management & academic infrastructure
SD055	Link to UM's 'Digital Education Committee' webpage	Section 2: Governance, management & academic infrastructure
SD056	Link to UM's 'Doctoral Academic Committee' webpage	Section 2: Governance, management & academic infrastructure
SD057	Link to UM's 'Editorial Board – Malta University Press' webpage	Section 2: Governance, management & academic infrastructure
SD058	Link to UM's 'Library Committee' webpage	Section 2: Governance, management & academic infrastructure

SD059	Link to UM's 'Ph.D. and Master (research) Degrees Scholarship Selection Board' webpage	Section 2: Governance, management & academic infrastructure
SD060	Link to UM's 'Professional Development Committee of the Doctoral School' webpage	Section 2: Governance, management & academic infrastructure
SD061	Link to UM's 'Quality Assurance Committee' webpage	Section 2: Governance, management & academic infrastructure Standard 1 Standard 3 Standard 10
SD062	Link to UM's 'Selection Committee for the Lindau Nobel Laureate Meetings' webpage	Section 2: Governance, management & academic infrastructure
SD063	Link to UM's 'Fitness to Practise Board' webpage	Section 2: Governance, management & academic infrastructure
SD064	Link to UM's 'University Admissions Board' webpage	Section 2: Governance, management & academic infrastructure
SD065	Link to UM's 'University Assessment Appellate Board' webpage	Section 2: Governance, management & academic infrastructure
SD066	Link to UM's 'University Assessment Disciplinary Board' webpage	Section 2: Governance, management & academic infrastructure
SD067	Link to UM's 'University Research Ethics Committee' webpage	Section 2: Governance, management & academic infrastructure
SD068	Link to UM's 'Web Editorial Board' webpage	Section 2: Governance, management & academic infrastructure Standard 9
SD069	<i>University Assessment Regulations (2009)</i>	Section 2: Governance, management & academic infrastructure

SD070 to SD091	Links to the profiles of UM's Top Management	Section 2: Governance, management & academic infrastructure
SD092 to SD140	Links to the profiles of the Deans and Directors of UM's Faculties, Institutes, Centres and Schools (FICS)	Section 2: Governance, management & academic infrastructure
SD141	Link to the Faculty of Arts webpage	Section 2: Governance, management & academic infrastructure
SD142	Link to the Faculty for the Built Environment webpage	Section 2: Governance, management & academic infrastructure
SD144	Link to the Faculty of Economics, Management & Accountancy webpage	Section 2: Governance, management & academic infrastructure
SD145	Link to the Faculty of Education webpage	Section 2: Governance, management & academic infrastructure
SD146	Link to the Faculty of Engineering webpage	Section 2: Governance, management & academic infrastructure
SD147	Link to the Faculty of Health Sciences webpage	Section 2: Governance, management & academic infrastructure
SD148	Link to the Faculty of Information and Communication Technology webpage	Section 2: Governance, management & academic infrastructure
SD149	Link to the Faculty of Laws webpage	Section 2: Governance, management & academic infrastructure
SD150	Link to the Faculty of Media & Knowledge Sciences webpage	Section 2: Governance, management & academic infrastructure
SD151	Link to the Faculty of Medicine & Surgery webpage	Section 2: Governance, management & academic infrastructure

SD152	Link to the Faculty of Science webpage	Section 2: Governance, management & academic infrastructure
SD153	Link to the Faculty for Social Wellbeing webpage	Section 2: Governance, management & academic infrastructure
SD154	Link to the Faculty of Theology webpage	Section 2: Governance, management & academic infrastructure
SD155	Link to the Institute of Aerospace Technologies webpage	Section 2: Governance, management & academic infrastructure
SD156	Link to the Institute of Anglo-Italian Studies webpage	Section 2: Governance, management & academic infrastructure
SD157	Link to the International Institute for Baroque Studies webpage	Section 2: Governance, management & academic infrastructure
SD158	Link to the Institute for Climate Change and Sustainable Development webpage	Section 2: Governance, management & academic infrastructure
SD159	Link to the Confucius Institute webpage	Section 2: Governance, management & academic infrastructure
SD160	Link to the Finance Office webpage	Standard 2
SD161	Link to the The Edward de Bono Institute for Creative Thinking and Innovation webpage	Section 2: Governance, management & academic infrastructure
SD162	Link to the Institute of Digital Games webpage	Section 2: Governance, management & academic infrastructure
SD163	Link to the Mediterranean Academy of Diplomatic Studies webpage	Section 2: Governance, management & academic infrastructure
SD164	Link to the Institute of Earth Systems webpage	Section 2: Governance, management & academic infrastructure

SD165	Link to the Institute for European Studies webpage	Section 2: Governance, management & academic infrastructure
SD166	Link to the Islands & Small States Institute webpage	Section 2: Governance, management & academic infrastructure
SD167	Link to the Institute of Linguistics and Language Technology webpage	Section 2: Governance, management & academic infrastructure
SD168	Link to the Institute of Maltese Studies webpage	Section 2: Governance, management & academic infrastructure
SD169	Link to the Mediterranean Institute webpage	Section 2: Governance, management & academic infrastructure
SD170	Link to the Institute for Physical Education & Sport webpage	Section 2: Governance, management & academic infrastructure
SD171	Link to the Institute of Space Sciences & Astronomy webpage	Section 2: Governance, management & academic infrastructure
SD172	Link to the Institute for Sustainable Energy webpage	Section 2: Governance, management & academic infrastructure
SD173	Link to the Institute for Tourism, Travel & Culture webpage	Section 2: Governance, management & academic infrastructure
SD174	Link to the Centre for Biomedical Cybernetics webpage	Section 2: Governance, management & academic infrastructure
SD175	Link to the Centre for Distributed Ledger Technologies webpage	Section 2: Governance, management & academic infrastructure
SD176	Link to the Euro-Mediterranean Centre for Educational Research webpage	Section 2: Governance, management & academic infrastructure

SD177	Link to the Centre for English Language Proficiency webpage	Section 2: Governance, management & academic infrastructure
SD178	Link to the Centre for Entrepreneurship & Business Incubation webpage	Section 2: Governance, management & academic infrastructure
SD179	Link to the Centre for Environmental Education & Research webpage	Section 2: Governance, management & academic infrastructure
SD180	Link to the Centre for Labour Studies webpage	Section 2: Governance, management & academic infrastructure
SD181	Link to the Centre for the Liberal Arts & Sciences webpage	Section 2: Governance, management & academic infrastructure
SD182	Link to the Centre for Literacy webpage	Section 2: Governance, management & academic infrastructure
SD183	Link to the Centre for Molecular Medicine & Biobanking webpage	Section 2: Governance, management & academic infrastructure
SD184	Link to the Centre for Resilience & Socio-emotional Health webpage	Section 2: Governance, management & academic infrastructure
SD185	Link to the Centre for the Study & Practice of Conflict Resolution webpage	Section 2: Governance, management & academic infrastructure
SD186	Link to the Centre for Traditional Chinese Medicine webpage	Section 2: Governance, management & academic infrastructure
SD187	Link to the Doctoral School webpage	Section 2: Governance, management & academic infrastructure
SD188	Link to the International School for Foundation Studies webpage	Section 2: Governance, management & academic infrastructure Standard 7

SD189	Link to the School of Performing Arts webpage	Section 2: Governance, management & academic infrastructure
SD190	Link to UM's 'Msida Campus' webpage	Section 2: Governance, management & academic infrastructure
SD191	Link to UM's 'Valletta Campus' webpage	Section 2: Governance, management & academic infrastructure
SD192	Link to UM's 'Conferences & Events Unit' webpage	Section 2: Governance, management & academic infrastructure Standard 1
SD193	Link to UM's 'Research, Innovation & Development Trust (RIDT)' webpage	Section 2: Governance, management & academic infrastructure Standard 1
SD194	Link to UM's 'Gozo Campus' webpage	Section 2: Governance, management & academic infrastructure
SD195	Link to UM's 'Marsaxlokk Campus' webpage	Section 2: Governance, management & academic infrastructure
SD196	Link to UM's IT Services webpage	Section 2: Governance, management & academic infrastructure Standard 7
SD197	Link to UM's Library webpage	Section 2: Governance, management & academic infrastructure Standard 1 Standard 7
SD198	Link to UM's DegreePlus webpage	Section 2: Governance, management & academic infrastructure Standard 7

SD199	Link to UM's Chaplaincy webpage	Section 2: Governance, management & academic infrastructure Standard 7
SD200	Link to UM's Health & Wellness Centre webpage	Section 2: Governance, management & academic infrastructure Standard 7
SD201	Link to UM's Help Hub webpage	Section 2: Governance, management & academic infrastructure Standard 1 Standard 5 Standard 7
SD202	Link to UM's DegreePlus 'Sports and Wellness' webpage	Section 2: Governance, management & academic infrastructure Standard 7
SD203	<i>'Towards equity and inclusion in higher education in Europe'</i> (Eurydice thematic report)	Section 2: Governance, management & academic infrastructure
SD204	Link to UM's 'Programme Validation Committee' webpage	Section 2: Governance, management & academic infrastructure Standard 1 Standard 3 Standard 10
SD205	Link to UM's Academic Programmes Quality & Resources Unit (APQRU) webpage	Standard 1 Standard 3 Standard 10
SD206	Link to UM's 'Periodic Programme Review' webpage	Standard 1 Standard 10
SD207	Link to the Malta Further & Higher Authority (MFHEA) website	Standard 1

SD208	UM's <i>Internal Audit Activity Charter</i>	Standard 1
SD209	<i>The National Quality Assurance Framework for Further & Higher Education</i>	Standard 1 Standard 11
SD210	<i>Subsidiary Legislation 607.03</i>	Standard 1 Standard 3 Standard 10
SD211	<i>Report on the Quality Mailshot Initiative (2021-2022)</i>	Standard 1
SD212	Link to UM's 'Quality mailshots' webpage	Standard 1
SD213	Link to UM's Internal Audit Function webpage	Standard 1
SD214	Link to UM's 'Assessment at UM' webpage	Standard 3 Standard 4
SD215	Link to UM's 'Statutes, regulations and bye-laws' webpage	Standard 1
SD216	Link to UM's Office of the Registrar webpage	Standard 1 Standard 5
SD217	Link to UM's Office for Human Resources Management & Development's 'Policies and procedures' webpage	Standard 1
SD218	Link to UM's International Office webpage	Section 1: Introduction and overview
SD219	Link to UM's 'Forms for students' webpage	Standard 1
SD220	Link to UM's Standard Operating Procedures portal	Standard 1
SD221	UM SOP UNI-001-01: <i>Management of Standard Operating Procedures at the University of Malta</i>	Standard 1
SD222	Link to UM's 'Audited statements' webpage	Standard 2

SD223	Link to UM's 'Programme validation' webpage	Standard 2 Standard 3 Standard 10
SD224	Link to UM's 'Our annual reports' webpage	Standard 2
SD225	UM SOP ZOS-001-01: <i>Entity Annual Reporting</i>	Standard 2
SD226	UM's <i>Study-Unit Types for Undergraduate and Postgraduate Courses</i>	Standard 4
SD227	Link to UM's 'Study-unit approval' webpage	Standard 3 Standard 4
SD228	Link to UM's 'Assessments' webpage	Standard 7
SD229	Link to UM's Office for Professional Academic Development (OPAD) webpage	Standard 3 Standard 6
SD230	UM's <i>Stage 1 Proposal Form</i>	Standard 3
SD231	UM's <i>Stage 2 Proposal Form</i>	Standard 3
SD232	UM's <i>Study-Unit Approval Form</i>	Standard 3
SD233	Link to UM's Office for Human Resources Management & Development webpage	Standard 6
SD234	UM's <i>General Regulations for University Undergraduate Awards, 2019</i>	Standard 3 Standard 5
SD235	UM's <i>Policy for the Recognition and Accreditation of Prior Learning (RPL) and Facilitation of Access to University Courses</i>	Standard 5
SD236	Link to UM's Senate webpage	Standard 3
SD237	' <i>The Role of the Internal Quality Review (IQR) Panel</i> ' (Extract from UM's <i>Periodic Programme Review: Policy & Procedures</i>)	Standard 3 Standard 10

SD238	<i>'The Role of the PPR Committee'</i> (Extract from UM's <i>Periodic Programme Review: Policy & Procedures</i>)	Standard 3
SD239	<i>'The Role of the Stakeholders' Committee (SC)'</i> (Extract from UM's <i>Periodic Programme Review: Policy & Procedures</i>)	Standard 3
SD240	UM's <i>Distance & E-Learning Policy</i>	Standard 3
SD241	Link to UM's ACCESS – Disability Support Unit webpage	Standard 4 Standard 7
SD242	UM's <i>Fitness to Practise Policy</i>	Standard 4
SD243	Link to the WISEflow website	Standard 4 Standard 5
SD244	Link to UM's Junior College 'Diversity Committee' webpage	Standard 7
SD245	UM SOP XRE-001-04: <i>Standard Operating Procedures for the Visiting Lecturers and External Examiners</i>	Standard 4
SD246	Link to UM's 'Webinars' webpage	Standard 5
SD247	Link to UM's 'Study' webpage	Standard 5
SD248	Link to UM's <i>Prospective Applicants Vodcast</i> (aired on UM's Facebook page on 05-07-22)	Standard 5
SD249	UM's <i>Guidance for Applicants – Admissions 2022/23</i>	Standard 5
SD250	UM's <i>Undergraduate Prospectus 2022 & 2023</i>	Standard 3 Standard 5
SD251	UM's <i>Postgraduate Prospectus 2021 & 2022</i>	Standard 3 Standard 5
SD252	UM SOP ZAR-007-02: <i>Procedure for the Evaluation of Local Applications</i>	Standard 5

SD253	Link to UM's 'Recognition of Prior Learning' webpage	Standard 5 Standard 7
SD254	Link to UM's Knowledge Transfer Office (KTO) webpage	Standard 1
SD255	<i>'Peer-to-Peer Observation and Reflection'</i> (Quality Mailshot, 01-04-20)	Standard 4
SD256	Link to UM's 'Opening of Academic Year 2022-23' webpage	Standard 5
SD257	Link to UM's 'The Student Life Cycle' webpage	Standard 5
SD258	<i>'Quality Assurance – Quality Culture'</i> (Newspoint article, 04-05-16)	Standard 11
SD259	Link to UM's 'Diploma Supplement' webpage	Standard 5
SD260	Link to UM's Student Records Application online form	Standard 5
SD261	Link to UM's 'Certification and graduation' webpage	Standard 5
SD262	<i>'Recognising his Holiness Bartholomew I at the Honoris Causa ceremony'</i> (Newspoint article, 09-12-22)	Standard 5
SD263	<i>General Regulations for University Postgraduate Awards, 2008</i>	Standard 1
SD264	<i>Doctor of Philosophy – Ph.D. – Degree Regulations, 2008</i>	Standard 1 Standard 5
SD265	<i>Professional Doctorate Degree Course Regulations, 2014</i>	Standard 1
SD266	Link to UM's 'Office of the Registrar: Policies and guidelines' webpage	Standard 1
SD267	UM's <i>Collective Agreement for Academic Staff of the University of Malta 2019-2023</i>	Standard 6
SD268	Link to UM's 'Orientation' webpage	Standard 6
SD269	Link to UM's 'Courses and resources' webpage	Standard 6

SD270	Link to UM's 'ESF.04.083' webpage	Standard 6
SD271	Link to UM's 'Academic Resources Fund (ARF) and the Continuous Professional Development Fund (CPD)' webpage	Standard 6
SD272	Link to UM's 'Scholarships and bursaries' webpage	Standard 6
SD273	<i>'University of Malta students among the most satisfied with teaching staff during COVID-19, study finds'</i> (Newspoint article, 02-07-20)	Standard 6
SD274	Link to the COVID-19 Social Science Lab's 'Global Student Survey' webpage	Standard 6
SD275	Link to UM's Research Support Services Directorate (RSSD) webpage	Standard 1 Standard 6
SD276	Link to UM's Project Support Office (PSO) webpage	Standard 1 Standard 6
SD277	Link to the Jobsplus 'Free Childcare Scheme' webpage	Standard 6
SD278	Link to UM's <i>it-Tajra</i> Childcare Centre webpage	Standard 6
SD279	Link to UM's <i>Ilwien</i> Childcare Centre webpage	Standard 6
SD280	Link to UM's 'Student societies' webpage	Standard 1 Standard 7
SD281	Link to the UM Library's 'Melitensia' webpage	Standard 7
SD282	Link to the UM Library's 'Archives & Rare Books' webpage	Standard 7
SD283	UM's <i>Open Access Policy</i>	Standard 1 Standard 7
SD284	Link to the UM Library's Open Access Repository (OAR@UM)	Standard 1 Standard 7

SD285	Link to UM's 'Google Workspace' webpage	Standard 7
SD286	Link to UM's 'VLE, Turnitin, Zoom and Panopto' webpage	Standard 7
SD287	Link to UM's 'Turnitin' webpage	Standard 7
SD288	Link to UM's 'Lecture Capture' webpage	Standard 4 Standard 7
SD289	Link to UM's 'Zoom' webpage	Standard 4 Standard 7
SD290	Link to UM's 'Request Help' webpage	Standard 7
SD291	Link to UM's 'Learning spaces' webpage	Standard 7
SD292	Link to UM's 'Open access areas' webpage	Standard 7
SD293	Link to UM's 'Wi-Fi' webpage	Standard 7
SD294	Link to UM's 'Student Information Management System' webpage	Standard 5 Standard 7 Standard 8
SD295	Link to the Scientia's Syllabus Plus website	Standard 7
SD296	Link to UM's HyDi website	Standard 7
SD297	UM's <i>Harassment and Bullying Policy</i>	Standard 7
SD298	Link to the UM Library's 'Reading Lists' webpage	Standard 7
SD299	Link to UM's 'My UM app' webpage	Standard 5 Standard 7

SD300	Link to UM's 'User guides' webpage	Standard 4 Standard 7
SD301	Information brochure regarding Prof. Chris Haslam's visit to UM	Standard 11
SD302	Link to UM's 'IT Services: List of training offered' webpage	Standard 7
SD303	Link to UM's 'IT Services: Opening hours' webpage	Standard 7
SD304	UM's <i>Action plan for equity, diversity and inclusion at UM 2022-2025 (Gender+ Equity Plan)</i>	Standard 4 Standard 7
SD305	Link to UM's 'Equity, diversity and inclusion – Action Plan: Timeframes' webpage	Standard 7
SD306	<i>The University of Malta's Access Arrangements</i>	Standard 7
SD307	UM's <i>Guidelines to MATSEC Examinations Access Arrangements</i>	Standard 7
SD308	UM's <i>Sexual Harassment Policy</i>	Standard 7
SD309	UM's <i>Good Practice in Inclusive Language</i>	Standard 7
SD310	Link to the ' <i>I Belong Programme</i> ' website	Standard 7
SD311	Link to UM's 'Cottonera Resource Centre' webpage	Standard 7
SD312	Link to UM's 'Student Solidarity Fund' webpage	Standard 7
SD313	Link to UM's ' <i>Supporting suicidal and severely distressed students' training session webpage</i>	Standard 7
SD314	UM's ' <i>Supporting suicidal and/or severely distressed students' staff guidelines</i>	Standard 7
SD315	Link to UM's 'Voluntary work' webpage	Standard 7

SD316	Link to UM's 'Other experiences' webpage	Standard 7
SD317	Link to UM's 'Grants to Student Societies' webpage	Standard 7
SD318	Link to the <i>The Malta University Debating Union (MUDU)</i> Facebook page	Standard 7
SD319	Link to the ElectionBuddy website	Standard 7
SD320	Link to UM's Study-Unit Description for <i>PSY2650: Student Representation at University</i>	Standard 7
SD321	Link to UM's Department of Psychology webpage	Standard 7
SD322	<i>The University of Malta Student Charter</i>	Standard 7
SD323	<i>University of the Third Age Malta: Academic Programme 2022–2023</i>	Standard 7
SD324	Link to UM's U3A 'Our centres' webpage	Standard 7
SD325	Link to UM's Campus FM webpage	Standard 7
SD326	Link to UM's 'Strategic Plan: Implementation planning and monitoring' webpage	Section 1: Introduction and overview
SD327	Link to UM's 'Sport for students' webpage	Standard 7
SD328	Link to the <i>Malta University Sports Club (MUSC)</i> Facebook page	Standard 7
SD329	UM SOP UNI-005–01: <i>Procedure for Writing Student Handbooks</i>	Standard 7
SD330	Link to UM's Stipends Office webpage	Standard 7
SD331	<i>'Encouraging critical thinking through self-directed learning'</i> (Quality Mailshot, 14–12–22)	Standard 4
SD332	Link to UM's 'Administrative Information Management System (AIMS)' webpage	Standard 8

SD333	Link to UM's Marketing, Communications & Alumni Office (MCAO) webpage	Standard 9
SD334	UM's <i>University brand manual</i>	Standard 9
SD335	Link to UM's Facebook page	Standard 9
SD336	Link to UM's Twitter page	Standard 9
SD337	Link to UM's Instagram page	Standard 9
SD338	Link to UM's LinkedIn page	Standard 9
SD339	Link to UM's YouTube channel	Standard 9
SD340	Link to the Newspoint website	Standard 9
SD341	UM SOP ZAP-001-02: <i>Validation of New Programmes</i>	Standard 9
SD342	UM SOP ZAR-006-02: <i>Compiling the Prospectus</i>	Standard 9
SD343	Link to UM's Master of Science in Addiction Studies webpage	Standard 9
SD344	<i>External Quality Assurance Audit Report: University of Malta (2015)</i>	Standard 11
SD345	<i>Provider External Quality Assurance (EQA) Audit Follow-Up Report: University of Malta (July 2016)</i>	Standard 11
SD346	<i>Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG 2015)</i>	Standard 10
SD347	<i>Covering note to the External Quality Assurance Audit Report prepared by NCFHE following a review of the University of Malta (March 2016)</i>	Standard 11
SD348	UM's <i>Periodic Programme Review: Policy and Procedures</i>	Standard 10
SD349	UM's 5-6-Year PPR Schedule	Standard 10

SD350	A global student survey on <i>"Impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on life of higher education students"</i> (research project by Dr Alexander Aristovnik)	Standard 6
SD351	<i>'Presentation of Certificates – Foundations of University Teaching and Learning'</i> (Newspoint article, 01-07-19)	Standard 6
SD352	Link to UM's 'Orientation Day for Academics: Detailed schedule' webpage	Standard 6
SD353	Link to UM's 'Orientation Programme: Sessions' webpage	Standard 6
SD354	UM's <i>External Quality Assurance Audit 2015 – Recommendations Implementation Progress</i>	Section 3
SD355	<i>Memo – Coordinators for Courses</i> (as approved by the Senate on 27-10-16)	Standard 3
SD356	Self-Evaluation Document (SED) Template	Standard 10
SD357	<i>'The Quality Collaboration Visit'</i> (Extract from UM's <i>Periodic Programme Review: Policy & Procedures</i>)	Standard 10
SD358	<i>'Periodic Programme Review (PPR) Report'</i> (Extract from UM's <i>Periodic Programme Review: Policy & Procedures</i>)	Standard 4 Standard 10
SD359	<i>Visiting Lecturers and External Examiners Committee (VLEEC): Report to Senate regarding Academic Year 2021-2022</i>	Standard 4
SD360	<i>'The Stakeholders' Meeting'</i> (Extract from UM's <i>Periodic Programme Review: Policy & Procedures</i>)	Standard 10
SD361	Names, Qualifications & Emails of Lecturing Staff (Full-time & Part-time)	Standard 6
SD362	UM's <i>Manual of Recruitment, Selection & Job Descriptions of Top Management</i>	Standard 6
SD363	Link to the European University of the Seas (SEA-EU) website	Section 1: Introduction and overview
SD364	<i>Referencing Report</i> (2016)	Standard 3 Standard 5
SD365	Link to the Europass European Digital Credentials website	Standard 5

SD366	Link to UM's TAKEOFF Business Incubator website	Standard 5
SD367	'ZAAR Crowdfunding Platform' (Newspoint article, 07-03-16)	Standard 5
SD368	'A new fellowship scheme in post-doctoral research studies' (Newspoint article, 17-03-22)	Standard 5
SD369	Link to UM's IT Services 'My UM app / digital card FAQs'	Standard 5
SD370	Link to UM's 'English Communicative Aptitude (ECA) programme' webpage	Standard 7
SD371	UM's 'Governing Bodies' organigram	Section 2: Governance, Management and Academic Infrastructure
SD372	UM's 'Principal and Other Officers' organigram	Section 2: Governance, Management and Academic Infrastructure
SD373	Names and Profiles of all Top and Middle Management	Section 2: Governance, Management and Academic Infrastructure
SD374	Link to the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) International's website	Standard 11
SD375	Link to UM's 'Student recruitment' webpage	Standard 5
SD376	'Human Resources Office – Business Intelligence Solution' report	Standard 8
SD377	'Registrar's Office – Business Intelligence Solution' report	Standard 8
SD378	<i>External Quality Assurance Provider Audit Manual of Procedures</i>	Foreword p. 1
SD379	Link to UM's 'Guidelines and policies for staff' webpage	Standard 1









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Self-Assessment Report

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