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**QUALITY ASSURANCE**

**POLICIES & REGULATIONS**

*Nicosia, July 2023*

**QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICY & REGULATIONS**

The Policy for Quality Assurance describes and establishes the main pillars of our institutional Qualitative Assurance system.

The Quality Assurance Regulations are intended to ensure:

1. That the College has sound internal quality assurance systems and procedures for the assurance of quality and standards;
2. that these procedures are applied effectively at subject level to ensure the quality of individual programmes;
3. and that there are effective and regular means of reviewing the quality of programmes and the standards of awards, implementing any required changes, developments and enhancements

In examining the effectiveness of our quality assurance structures and mechanisms, we particularly take account of:

1. internal quality assurance reviews and their outcomes, especially at the level of the discipline and/or programme;
2. the use made of external reference points (chiefly the Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education (DI.P.A.E), but also standards and guidelines authored by the European Association of Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA));
3. publicly available information about the quality of programmes and the standard of awards;
4. internal systems for the management of information and their contribution to the effective oversight of quality and standards;
5. the development, use and publication of programme specifications;
6. the academic standards expected of and achieved by students with regards to both quality of work and ethical considerations;
7. the experience of students as learners, and the enhancement of their learning opportunities;
8. the quality assurance of teaching staff, including appointment criteria and the ways in which teaching effectiveness is appraised, improved and rewarded.

Ultimately, the College Policy for Quality Assurance intends to:

1. support all organisational units, committees, and members of staff to take on their responsibilities in quality assurance
2. ensure academic integrity and freedom and protect against academic fraud
3. guard against unfairness and discrimination against students or staff
4. support the involvement of external stakeholders in quality assurance
5. provide guidance to subcontractors and external associates as to what is expected of them

Within the College, ultimate responsibility for the Quality Assurance framework rests with the Director.

This handbook focuses on major areas of quality assurance or quality enhancement that we see as being of major importance to the College in maintaining appropriate oversight of its programmes and maintaining student experience more broadly.

Special Attention is drawn to the critical importance of ensuring that:

1. standard quality assurance procedures are time-tabled across the year, with prompts to ensure that necessary actions have been taken at the appropriate time
2. there are appropriate records of quality assurance reports/discussions/decisions at the appropriate levels.
3. there is consistency between the various sources of information provided for students, in particular between the Student Handbooks, programme specifications, and websites.
4. the appropriate flow of information takes place between various committees and directors

**Internal Committee of Quality Assurance**

An Internal Committee of Quality Assurance has been composed at the College.

The committee is composed as follows:

* Director – Mr. Savvas Adamides
* Academic Director (chair) – Mr. Antonis Thrassou
* Program Coordinators – Mr. Andreas Christoforou and Mrs. Susan Elfving
* Faculty Members – Mrs. Roxana Michaelides and Mr. Lefteris Kolokasides
* Administrative Staff – Mrs. Elena Stavrou
* Student Union Representative – Rubel Mahmud

Its aim is to improve the quality of the courses offered at the College. The quality of a course program relies on its ability to provide the appropriate solutions to meet the expectations of both students and employers.

The Internal Committee of Quality Assurance collects and analyses important information like for example the number of graduates according to the program, the employment status of its students and based on these, it plans specific improvement actions. It is by all means a system of self-assessment. The Committee of Quality Assurance:

• Is responsible to ensure that the standards mentioned in article 12 of the Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Higher Education and the Establishment and Operation of an Agency on Related Matters Law of 2015, are implemented.

• Co-ordinates the preparation of the self-evaluation reports of the college and prepares the general evaluation reports to be submitted to the Agency.

• Discusses ideas for new programs of study and accordingly refers to the Director (included in committee). If approved, meets with academic staff involved to form the programme from first draft to final proposal which is then discussed with the director for finalisation before referring to the CyQAA.

• Meets with program coordinators and the Academic Committee to evaluate new programs of study launched by evaluating the goals and objectives of each program and making relevant revisions where necessary and considering students’ evaluations and other factors such as the number of students in the program.

• In coordination with the College Council, it approves, monitors and evaluates the development plan of the College and adjust the strategy by examining external factors affecting the plan, such as state policies and the state of the economy.

• In coordination with the Finance Director and the Director (included in committee), manages the annual budget to ensure the smooth operation of the College in a way that supports the mission and objectives of the College and refers expense requests such as for books, visits and seminars to the Director for approval.

The regulations that concern the quality assurance of the program define specific responsibilities and procedures. The prospectus and/or the regulations for quality assurance provide details and evidence for the support and the management of the study program.

**Standards**

The College Quality Assurance Policy is guided by the following standards:

**Design, approval, monitoring and review of programmes**

The College’s quality assurance policy wants to have processes for the design and approval of their programmes. The programmes should be designed so that they meet the objectives set for them, including the intended learning outcomes. The qualification resulting from a programme should be clearly specified and communicated, and refer to the correct level of the national qualifications framework for higher education and, consequently, to the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area.

**Student learning, teaching and assessment**

The College’s quality assurance policy wants to ensure that the programmes are delivered in a way that encourages students to take an active role in creating the learning process, and that the assessment of students reflects this approach.

To ensure proper method of assessment, the Committee has also established the Double Marking scheme. According to the scheme, 10% of the exams papers are randomly selected for second marking by the more experienced lecturers and are reviewed by the Academic Director if required. For the time being, the lecturers that undertake the responsibility of second marking are: Mr. Antonis Thrassou, Mr. Andreas Christoforou and Mrs. Roxana Michaelidou. If, following double marking, the First and Second Markers cannot agree on the marks of one or more of the students undertaking a component of assessment, and a resolution is not possible, the Head of School, or their formally-appointed nominee, will appoint a senior member of staff, who has not acted as either a First Marker or a Second Marker for the component of assessment, to review all the work covered by the first and second markers concerned, and whose marks will be those reported to the Board.

**Student Admission, progression, recognition and certification**

The College’s quality assurance policy wants to ensure that the programmes are delivered in a way that encourages students to take an active role in creating the learning process, and that the assessment of students reflects this approach.

**Teaching Staff**

The College’s quality assurance policy and committee wants to assure themselves of the competence of their teachers. They aim to apply fair and transparent processes for the recruitment and development of the staff.

The process starts with the induction program that all lecturers are obligated to attend. The induction sessions are followed by training from the Academic Director and the officers, along with a strong support and mentoring system.

Following the recommendations of the External Evaluation Committee; the College’s administration and the Quality Assurance Committee established a formal mentoring system that involves mentors and mentees meeting up for frequent face-to-face mentoring sessions during the academic year. The basis of this system is peer-review evaluation and validation, where mentors are the more experienced lecturers and mentees are newly-hired lecturers. The peer-mentors will be appointed at the beginning of every academic year after the Internal Quality Committee’s approval.

Furthermore, every semester the academic department organizes the student evaluation procedure, where the students get to evaluate their lecturers, the administration services, the student resources and their courses. The results regarding the teaching staff are examined and analysed by the academic department and they are communicated to the lecturers through personal email.

**Learning resources and student support**

The College’s quality assurance policy aims to have appropriate funding for learning and teaching activities and ensure that adequate and readily accessible learning resources and student support are provided.

**Information Management**

The College’s quality assurance policy wants to ensure that they collect, analyse and use relevant information for the effective management of their programmes and other activities.

The College’s quality assurance policy wants to publish information about their activities, including programmes, which is clear, accurate, objective, up-to date and readily accessible.

**Academic Dishonesty – Plagiarism**

**Principles**

In entering higher education, students commit themselves to a process of becoming recognized by society as having achieved a certain level of learning. A student who misleads society as to the authenticity of this achievement is academically dishonest not only to those on whom the deception is practiced, but also to him/herself. The dishonesty relates to the process of education in that the evidence on which society’s recognition is based has been obtained in an unethical manner, and to the outcome of education in that the level of achievement is based on a false claim.

The maintenance of fair and honest conduct is therefore an essential requirement of the system for assessing students’ learning and it is in theirs and the university’s interests that this should be the guiding principle at all times. Academic dishonesty is a serious offence and it is important that the duties and rights of all those involved with the assessment process be clearly defined and effectively publicized.

**Definitions**

Academic dishonesty may be defined as any attempt by a student, or any attempt by an individual to aid a student, to gain an unfair advantage in any assessment (including an assessment of practice or an assessment in practice) by deception or fraudulent means.

Academic dishonesty may be exhibited in a number of ways of which the following are examples.

i. Aiding and abetting a student in any form of dishonest practice.

ii. Bribery: paying or offering inducements to another person to obtain or to attempt to obtain an unfair advantage.

iii. Calculator fraud: the use of unauthorized material stored in the memory of a programmable calculator with storage facilities.

iv. Collusion: the representation of a piece of unauthorized group work as the work of a single student.

v. Commissioning another person to complete an assignment which is then submitted as the student’s own work.

vi. Computer fraud: the use of the material which belongs to another person and which is stored on a hard or floppy disk without acknowledgement and or without the written permission of the owner.

vii. Duplication: the inclusion in coursework of any material which is identical or substantially similar to material which has already been submitted for any other assessment within the university or elsewhere (for example, the use of essay banks).

viii. False declarations made in order to receive special consideration by a board of examiners or to obtain extensions to deadlines or exemption from work.

ix. Falsification of data: the presentation of data, e.g. in laboratory reports, projects, clinical profiles, assessment portfolios, based on work purported to have been carried out by the student, but which have been invented by the student or altered, copied or obtained by unfair means.

x. Forgery: the falsification of signature(s) or documents related to certification or assessment.

xi. Misconduct in examinations or tests: behavior aimed at gaining an unfair advantage

xii. Taking unauthorized materials into an examination or test;

xiii. Obtaining an advance copy of an “unseen” written examination or test paper;

xiv. Communicating, or trying to communicate, in any way with another student during an examination or test;

xv. Copying from another student;

xvi. Leaving the examination or test venue to consult pre-hidden cribs/notes;

xvii. Removing any items of stationery or other materials from the examination or test venue without permission or contrary to instructions.

xviii. Impersonation: arranging or attempting to arrange for another person to take one’s place in an examination or test; or being a party to an impersonation.

xix. Plagiarism: the representation of another person’s work as one’s own or the use of another person’s work without acknowledgement, eg:

The direct importation into one’s work of more than a single phrase from another person’s work without the use of quotation marks and identification of the source;

Making a copy of all or part of another person’s work and presenting it as one’s own by failing to disclose the source;

Making extensive use of another person’s work, either by summarizing or paraphrasing it merely by changing a few words or altering the order of presentation, without acknowledgement, the use of the ideas of another person without acknowledgement of the source, or the submission or presentation of work as one’s own which is substantially the ideas or intellectual data of another.

Like cheating in an examination, plagiarism is a serious offence. Where there is evidence to suggest plagiarism, a formal process of enquiry may begin. If it is found that plagiarism has taken place a student may fail the piece of work concerned, and will not necessarily be permitted to resubmit it for a pass mark.

Plagiarism in a major piece of work at the final level of your course can result in a decision by the Disciplinary Committee that the Final Assessment Board will not award you an award, and such a decision has been taken in at least one recent case. If evidence of serious plagiarism comes to light after the Final Assessment Board has agreed final results, it is still possible to cancel the award.

All college students are expected to use other people’s ideas. You will use books and journals in the library, some assignments involve working collaboratively with others, and in some cases you may have access to other people’s work on computer disk or over a computer network. When undertaking a major assignment, you may sometimes legitimately make reference to similar projects undertaken by students on your own or another course in previous years. However, other people’s work must be used in a principled way, with due acknowledgement of authorship. Recognized standards of acknowledging the work of others will be discussed during your courses.

Where plagiarism is suspected, decisions on assessed work will be made only when the facts have been established. All serious cases may be considered by the Final Assessment Board, and reported to the Disciplinary Committee of the College.

**RESPONIBILITIES**

It is the responsibility of staff to frame assessment requirements and procedures in a clear and unambiguous manner in the light of the guidelines. It is the responsibility of students to acquaint themselves with these guidelines and to act in accordance with them.

**Plagiarism Detection Tools**

Plagiarism detection is the process of locating instances of plagiarism within a work or document. The widespread use of computers and the advent of the Internet has made it easier to plagiarize the work of others. Most cases of plagiarism are found in academia, where documents are typically essays or reports. However, plagiarism can be found in virtually any field, including novels, scientific papers, art designs, and source code.

The main plagiarism detection tool used by our staff is Dupli Checker (<https://www.duplichecker.com>) . The College has a paid subscription and gives the credentials (username and password) to teaching staff.

In addition to the above, the following plagiarism detection tools can also used by our staff, if they so choose:

1. Plagiarisma.net

2. Plagiarism Detector

3. Grammarly

4. Plagtracker

5. Anti-Plagiarism Software (sourceforge.net)

6. Paper Rater

7. Plagiarism Checker

8. Plagium

9. Viper Plagiarism Checker

10. PlagScan.com

**Disciplinary Procedures**

In the event that a student is suspected of committing a disciplinary violation:

- The instructor or another member of the faculty or a student may forward a report of the incident to the Chair of the Disciplinary Committee.

- The Disciplinary Committee members hear the case.

- Call the student(s) concerned, witnesses and other people who know of the incident, take minutes of the hearing.

- After deliberation they decide whether the allegation is upheld or not.

- If the allegation is upheld the Committee imposes an appropriate sanction depending upon the gravity of the offence.

**Disciplinary Procedures for Plagiarism:**

If a lecturer suspects that a piece of coursework has been plagiarized, the following procedure must be followed:

- The lecturer needs to inform the Chair of the Disciplinary Committee about the suspected plagiarism and provide all evidence;

- The Disciplinary Committee will examine the evidence and decide with the lecturer if the suspicion is reasonable and if the case needs to be investigated;

- Upon the consensus among the lecturer and the Disciplinary Committee members, a viva will be arranged within a reasonable period of time with the concerned student(s), the lecturer, and the Disciplinary Committee members being present;

- The lecturer will immediately inform the student(s) concerned about the suspicion of plagiarism and request them to attend the viva;

- During the viva, the student(s) concerned will need to prove their knowledge on the claimed piece of work as well as providing necessary references and notes upon request;

- Upon the completion of the viva, the lecturer and the Disciplinary Committee members will decide if the suspected plagiarism can be confirmed as well as the appropriate penalty.

- The suspicion is proven and the student(s) admit the offence;

- The suspicion cannot be directly proven and the student(s) admit the offence;

- The suspicion cannot be directly proven and the student(s) don’t admit the offence;