Internal Policy
for
Quality Assurance

July 2023

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1. Mission Statement

To educate students and professionals to be curious individuals with in-depth scientific knowledge, comprehensive technical and professional skills and a sound moral compass ready for work and further education.

Our IQA policy aims to ensure academic integrity and to provide the foundation to ensure the education provided to students and professionals systematically achieve our mission statement.

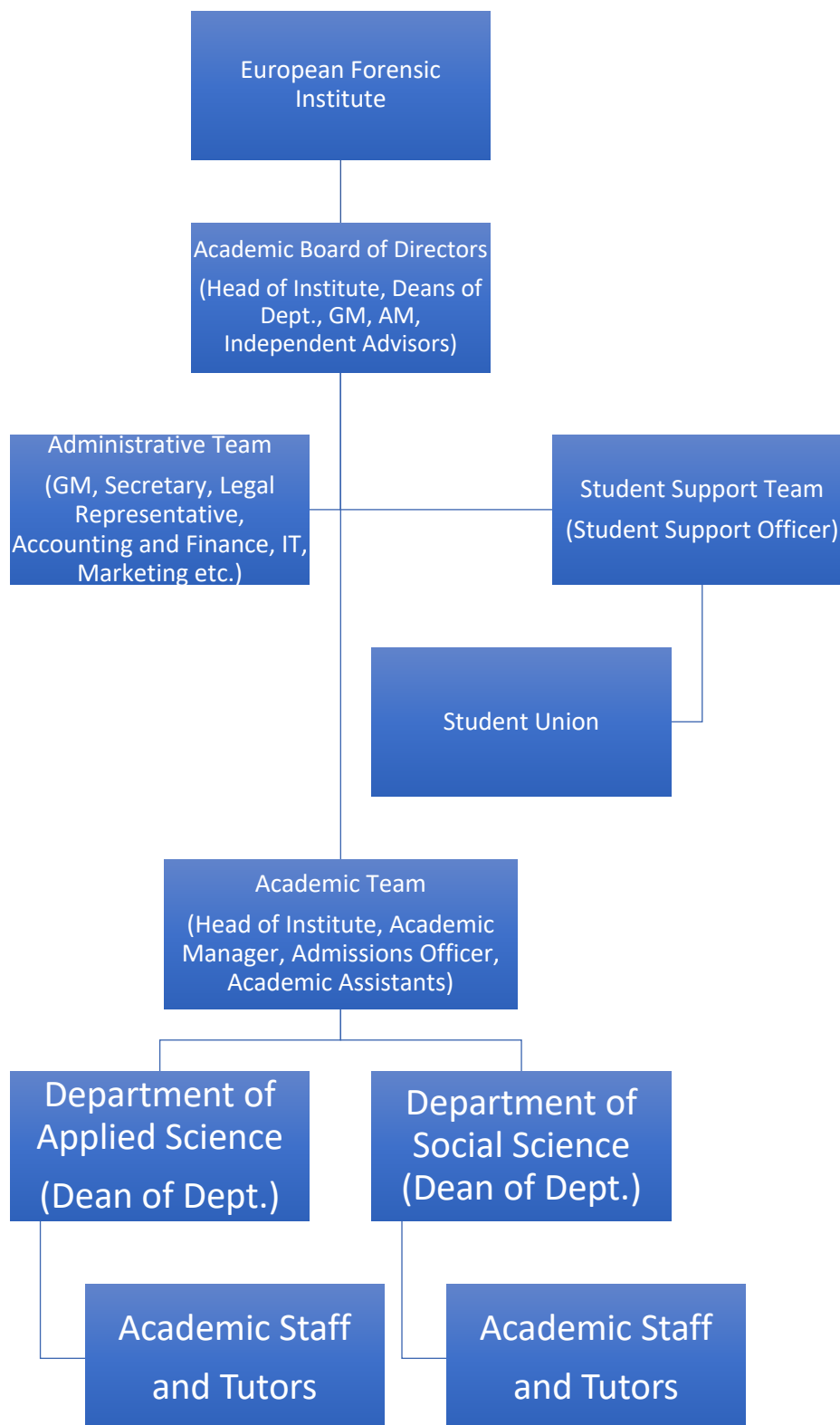# 2. About the Institution

2.1   History

The European Forensic Institute is a Higher Education Institution in Malta, founded in 2018 and fully accredited by the Malta Further and Higher Education Authority (MFHEA) with license no. 2018-014.

Our office and laboratory are located at the state-of-the-art Malta Life Sciences Park where our in-presence lessons and laboratory sessions take place.

The origin of the European Forensic Institute brings us back to 2011, when experts in the fields of criminology, investigation, insurance and security decided to join forces to establish a working group. The purpose is to create a professional hub in the field of forensic investigations, based on the corporate philosophy of major US law firms and businesses which operate in this field. The project team dedicated itself to providing a wide variety of consultancy services to cover the needs of the courts, police forces, lawyers, insurance companies and businesses, ensuring efficient services thanks to operational offices spread throughout Europe.

The European Forensic Institute was founded in 2018 from experiences gained in education and consulting. Malta was chosen to undertake this new academic experience for a specific reason. Malta is a country with thousands of years of history where since ancient times and for many reasons, different cultures and traditions, from north Europe to Middle East, have met and have mixed together creating a truly unique society. Moreover, this island represents one of the most important pivots in the Mediterranean in fields such as IT and is one of the most reliable business centers in the world. Malta, finally, is one of the few European countries that is both part of the European Union and the British Commonwealth. In other words, Malta is the most suitable place for higher education, especially in the field of forensic sciences, for students who wish to study on at international level.

2.2   Organisational and Governance Structure

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│   European Forensic     │
│      Institute          │
└─────────────────────────┘
            │
┌─────────────────────────┐
│ Academic Board of       │
│ Directors               │
│ (Head of Institute,     │
│ Deans of Dept., GM, AM, │
│ Independent Advisors)   │
└─────────────────────────┘
            │
┌─────────────────────────┐          ┌─────────────────────────┐
│ Administrative Team     │          │ Student Support Team    │
│ (GM, Secretary, Legal   │──────────│ (Student Support        │
│ Representative,         │          │ Officer)                │
│ Accounting and Finance, │          └─────────────────────────┘
│ IT, Marketing etc.)     │                      │
└─────────────────────────┘          ┌─────────────────────────┐
            │                        │    Student Union        │
            │                        └─────────────────────────┘
┌─────────────────────────┐
│ Academic Team           │
│ (Head of Institute,     │
│ Academic Manager,       │
│ Admissions Officer,     │
│ Academic Assistants)    │
└─────────────────────────┘
       │          │
┌──────────────┐ ┌──────────────┐
│ Department of│ │ Department of│
│ Applied      │ │ Social       │
│ Science      │ │ Science      │
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│ Dept.)       │ │ Dept.)       │
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│ Academic     │ │ Academic     │
│ Staff and    │ │ Staff and    │
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All those charged with governance are assessed to be fit and proper persons to deliver our higher education programmes.

2.3   Roles and Responsibilities

The table below details the key roles and responsibilities within each team.

Team	Roles	Responsibilities
Academic Board of Directors (the "Academic Board"	• Head of Institute • Deans of Dept. • Independent Advisors • General Manager • Academic Manager • Student Union Board President	• Overall leadership and management • Setting and managing strategic direction • Internal quality assurance • Course approval • Approval of new resources • Approval of budget
Student Support Team	• Student Support Officer • Personal Tutors • Student Reps	• Overall welfare of students including emotional wellbeing • Addressing students' feedback and complaints
Administrative Team	• General Manager • Secretary • Legal Representative • Accounting and Finance • IT • Sales and Marketing	• Day to day running of the institute • Identify the need for new resources, ensuring adequate resources are available and allocating new resources • Budget preparation
Academic Team	• Head of Institute • Academic Manager • Academic Assistants • Deans of Dept. • Head of Admissions • Academic Staff • Laboratory Assistant	• Teaching, delivery and assignments • Student assessments • Identify the need for new resources • Identify the need to introduce a new programme/course • Propose and plan new programmes/course content including learning outcomes, teaching methods and assessments • Assess student qualification and to ensure enrolment procedures and criteria are met
Student Union Board	• President (3rd Year & above) • Vice-President (2nd Year & above) • Treasurer (3rd Year & above) • Vice-Treasurer (2nd Year& above) • Ethics Rep (x2) • Programme Reps • General Members	• Voted by the student body • Embodies students interests within the Institution • Channel of communication between the Institution and students
Ethics Board	• Head of Institute • Academic Manager	• Ensure academic integrity of the institution's research projects

| | Student Union Board Ethics Reps | Involved in serious cases of |
| | Advisor/(s) | disciplinary procedures linked to academic misconduct |

Key Roles	Main Responsibility
Academic Board	• Governing body for academic activities • Quality objectives
Head of Institute	• Overall leadership of the Institute • Overseeing the student support team and academic team
Independent Advisors	• To provide independent advice on relevant issues when consulted upon other members of the board of directors
General Manager	• Overall responsibility for day to day management of the institute including overseeing the administrative team
Head of Admissions & Academic Manager	• Responsible for ensuring all enrolment procedures and entrance criteria are met • Ensure smooth operations of all academic activities

2.4   Head of Institute

The selection criteria for our Head of Institute include

- A minimum education qualification of EQF/MQF Level 7
- A minimum 15 years' experience in a balanced combination of academic and professional roles within the forensic science industry
- A minimum 10 years' experience in general management
- A wide-reaching knowledge of the industry including knowledge, skills and network
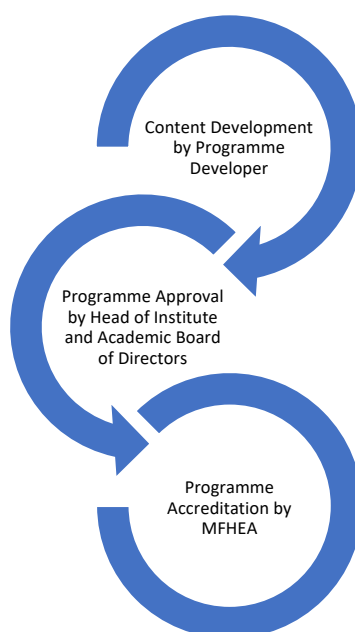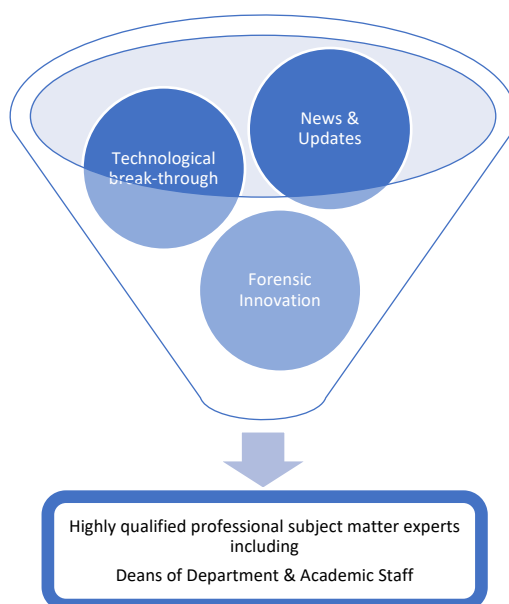
2.5   Financial Probity

The administration of European Forensic Institute is charged with preparing its annual budgets and accounts subject to the approval by its Board of Directors. When required, our accounts will be arranged to be audited.

3. Design and Approval of Programmes

3.1 Programme Design

3.1.1 General Programme Design

Our programmes are tailored to meet the learning outcomes set by Programme Developers who are and work alongside highly specialised experts to develop each course module including content, materials, learning methods and relevant ECTS credits to meet learning outcomes.

At the core of each programme is the strong link between theory and practice designed to prepare students for future employment. As such, we work alongside highly experienced subject matter experts in the professional world to design our programmes. These highly experienced experts also form our Academic Staff.

The programmes are designed to equip students with knowledge, skills and competencies based upon learning descriptors defined in the European Qualification Framework (EQF) and the Malta Qualification Framework (MQF).

Source: *https://ec.europa.eu/ploteus/content/descriptors-page*

EQF Level	Knowledge	Skills	Responsibility and autonomy
Level 5	Comprehensive, specialised, factual and theoretical knowledge within a field of work or study and an awareness of the boundaries of that knowledge	A comprehensive range of cognitive and practical skills required to develop creative solutions to abstract problems	Exercise management and supervision in contexts of work or study activities where there is unpredictable change; review and develop performance of self and others
Level 6	Advanced knowledge of a field of work or study, involving a critical understanding of theories and principles	Advanced skills, demonstrating mastery and innovation, required to solve complex and unpredictable problems in a specialised field of work or study	Manage complex technical or professional activities or projects, taking responsibility for decision-making in unpredictable work or study contexts; take responsibility for managing professional development of individuals and groups
Level 7	Highly specialised knowledge, some of which is at the forefront of knowledge in a field of work or study, as the basis for original thinking and/or research Critical awareness of knowledge issues in a field and at the interface between different fields	Specialised problem-solving skills required in research and/or innovation in order to develop new knowledge and procedures and to integrate knowledge from different fields	Manage and transform work or study contexts that are complex, unpredictable and require new strategic approaches; take responsibility for contributing to professional knowledge and practice and/or for reviewing the strategic performance of teams

Course credit is awarded according to the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS). Each full year of study is awarded up to a maximum of 60 ECTS. In accordance to Malta Qualifications Framework, each ECTS is considered to be equivalent to a workload of 25 hours of learning with a minimum of 5 hours of direct contact teaching hours plus practical sessions, mentoring, self-study such as reading, research, seminars, conferences, tutorials, assignments and assessments and related organised activities such as informal and non-formal learning.

3.1.2 Step-by-step process of Programme Design

by highly qualified professional subject matter experts including Deans of Department & Academic Staff

1. Identification of a need to introduce a new Programme/Course through experience and knowledge obtained in the field including through the news, scientific break-throughs, innovations in the forensic field, student feedback and market demand. Our staff are encouraged to raise opinions and ideas whenever inspiration spark through their experiences and knowledge. They can raise these opinions and ideas, including on the need for a new programme, to the Deans of Department and/or Head of Institution at any time.

2. After such exchange of ideas, if the Head of Institution decides (based on their professional judgement and experience) that the programme will be beneficial to both students and the institute, a meeting will be held to discuss the validity and feasibility of the programme. During this meeting, discussions will be held on the purpose of the programme and the key learning outcomes will be identified. The output of this meeting is documented in the Programme Development Inputs template.

3. The development of course content to achieve learning outcomes including duration, level, teaching methods, materials and forms of assessments is done by the Programme Developer through discussions with relevant academic staff with suitable experience.

4. Assignment of appropriate ECTS to programme and courses is done by the Programme Developer in accordance with the guidelines provided by the European Qualification Framework.

5. Identification of resources required for programme including availability and appropriateness is performed by the administrative team after completion of programme outline. Resources are deemed available if we have access and rights to utilise them and appropriate when satisfy the needs of the programme. The administrative team will hold a meeting with the Programme Developer to determine appropriateness.

6. For further detail on the Programme Design process, please refer to the Programme Accreditation Form provided by the MFHEA.

3.2   Programme Approval

All programmes are approved by the Head of Institution before being ratified by the Academic Board of Directors. After Approval by the Board, we send an application for accreditation of the programme.

3.3   Programme Accreditation

Programmes at European Forensic Institute are officially approved and accredited by the Malta Further and Higher Education Authority (MFHEA). It follows the Processes of Accreditation of Qualifications and Awards in Malta set by the MFHEA.

We complete a digital copy of the application form for Programme Accreditation by the MFHEA which we download from the MFHEA website and upon completion, we send it to MFHEA to begin the accreditation process.

Please refer to individual Programme Specification for detailed information on our programmes and course modules.

3.4   Programme Translation

Should we be required to offer our programmes in a language other than English, the following steps will be taken in order to maintain and guarantee the quality of our programme.

1. Establish a clear academic benefit to the student and the business need to deliver a programme in another language. These will include groups of students (at least 5) whose first native language is not English and will not be able to benefit academically during a programme delivered in English only.
2. Identify if the student group will require only theory lessons in the foreign language or both theory and practical lab sessions. A group of students will be deemed to be able to academically benefit from practical sessions in English is they meet B1 English Qualification per the Common European Framework Reference for languages (CEFR).
3. To deliver a programme in another language, we will identify suitably qualified lecturers in their respective fields per our programme specification with the addition of a minimum of C1 Qualification (CEFR) in the required foreign language. This will be validated through official examinations of qualifications such as through official language certificates or qualifications acquired in the required language and/or interviews where possible.
4. All assessments will be performed in the required language of the student in the same manner as described in section 4.3 below.
5. Should one of our in-house staff such as a member of the academic team be proficient in the required foreign language, our staff will review the translated programme and assessments for compliance, conformation and consistency with our original English language programme. Should it be a language foreign to us all, we will engage with an external linguistic expert proficient in the required language for this check.

4. Student-centred Learning, Teaching and Assessment

4.1   Learning Environment

Our learning environment is designed to enable students to attain the stated learning outcomes of the programme, and assessment strategies are designed to align with these outcomes. The student will be supported in their studies with respect to their diversity and their needs, enabling flexible learning paths; so that they learn progressively, developing their subject knowledge and skills and increasing their ability to work independently. It is important that they are able to demonstrate a clear appreciation of the scientific method and of the knowledge, skills and capacities needed for employment and practice in their chosen field.

Online learning is the predominant learning experience for attainment of knowledge, with attendance at the range of lectures/seminars/practical sessions/group work projects seen as essential. This is enhanced and given flexibility by use of our Digital Campus so that information and activities can be accessed at students' convenience.

Our direct contact hours are designed to focus on developing practical skills through laboratory work and field trips and to promote mutual respect within the learner-teacher relationship. Laboratory work will take place in our specialised laboratory equipped with the appropriate resources for developing practical skills in students. Field trips, when deemed necessary and beneficial for students will be organised by the academic staff with assistance from our administrative team.

In addition, where courses are offered with Honours, a significant element of self-led research will be required from the student.

All our learning environments are against intolerance of any kind or discrimination against the students or staff. Rude behaviour towards students should be reported to our student support office as a feedback/complaint following its procedures. Staff can report issues to the Deans of Department and/or Head of Institution who will investigate the matter and resolve it mutually when possible. It will be raised to our Board of Directors as required.

4.2   Teaching Methods

Our teaching methods have been developed to engage all our students in learning experiences that are enriching, enjoyable and intellectually stimulating. A variety of learning and teaching methods are used to reflect the variety of individual learning styles that inevitably exist within a group, so that students will experience teaching methods best suited to their own preferred learning style. Enhancing their employability is a core theme throughout the programmes.

Teaching methods are designed to support the move to autonomy and independent learning, and will include a mix of the following:
- lectures
- laboratory classes
- tutorials
- simulated crime scene experience
- case studies
- seminars and workshops, including oral presentations
- directed and independent study involving electronic resources on our Digital Campus (virtual learning environment), textbooks and other self-study materials
- problem-based learning
- interactive computer-based learning
- training and practice in the use of IT and software packages
- project work, both individual and in teams
- reading and interpreting research publications

4.3   Assessment Strategy

The main drivers of this strategy are to:

- provide innovative, challenging and stimulating assessment which will enable students to develop the knowledge and professional skills required for employment
- be student-centred, flexible and modern
- be fully supported by, and integrated with, technological approaches

- impart academic rigour to the teaching and learning processes
- support the development of students' independence, autonomy and critical self-reflection
- support different learners' needs at different stages of development

Within a balanced scheme, assessment methods will include a combination of the following:

- unseen examinations
- open-book examinations and other tests
- laboratory reports
- computer-based assessments
- problem solving
- report writing
- critical analysis of case studies
- oral, audio-visual and poster presentations
- dissertations*
- peer and self-assessment
- group work

* Dissertations are in the form of written research assignment from the self-led research module. Students will be responsible for the direction of the research including setting their own objectives, hypothesis, planning their research, doing the research, concluding and writing the report. Evaluation is based on the written work produced.

Formal assessments consist of
- time limited examination taken in person
- written laboratory reports
- written research assignments

Informal assessments will be conducted throughout the programme at the discretion of lecturers. The purpose of such informal assessment is to build students' skillsets (such as oral presentation – both in person and through web conference, as increasingly appropriate) and to monitor the progress of students.

As part of our assessment quality management process, the following will be taken into account

- the person/s managing and/or responsible for managing the assessment is/are familiar with testing and examination methods and receive/s support to further develop competences in the field
- to ensure fairness and consistency, method of assessments are published in advance of the examination and marking criteria is provided for each assessment
- assessment is consistent, fairly applied to all students and carried out in accordance with the stated marking criteria and method. The institute may take a sample of the assessments corrected so as to ensure that marking is done fair and in a consistent way
- the achieved learning outcomes are analysed in relation to the intended outcomes. Students are given feedback by Classter (they are graded on their assessment and academic staff will include relevant comment if any), which, if necessary, is linked to advice on the learning process

- a zero-tolerance policy towards academic fraud such plagiarism and cheating. When discovered, the Academic Staff will report the issue to the Academic Manager who will investigate and adjudicate on the issue with support from the Head of Institute when required. Further policy on academic fraud is available on our student handbook.
- assessment is carried out by more than one examiner to verify the identity of all students carrying out the assessment and to protect against cheating
- mitigating circumstances, including functional needs, will be considered on a case-by-case basis. The student will be required to raise the issue prior to the examination as far in advance as possible to the academic staff to be taken note of. The Academic Manager will process the request in accordance to the student handbook to determine the best course of action for the specific case.
- all paper records of the assessment process and grading are kept in Malta
- student complaints and appeals are directed to the academic team and will be subjected to a re-mark by a different second examiner. The decision of the second examiner during the re-mark is final. Further detail on the process is available on our student handbook.

5. Student Admission, Progression, Recognition and Certification

5.1   Student Admission

European Forensic Institute welcomes all applicants and operates a fair and transparent admissions process. Applicants are selected on the basis of merit, ability and potential. Our admissions procedures ensure the fair and equitable treatment of all applicants without exception.

Our application process is performed online, students are required to fill in an application form and submit this to us online alongside a copy of their certification(s). The application process is open to all. Students will receive an offer from us via email if they meet the entry requirements. We check that they meet the entry requirements by reviewing their application form and certificates.

Standard entry criteria are as follow:

Programme EQF/MQF Level	Entry Requirements
5 and 6	- a Maltese Secondary Education Certificate at Grade 5 or better in English Language and Mathematics; and - a Maltese Matriculation Certification in relevant subjects. Other internationally recognised equivalent qualifications are accepted
7	- all entry requirements for Level 6 Programmes; and - an internationally recognised Bachelor's Degree (Level 6) in relevant field

Specific admission requirements are set in each Programme Specification.

5.2   Student Progression

An induction is organised at the beginning of every programme and is designed as an introduction to

the programme and to the Institute. Its focus is very much about the European Forensic Institute systems and resources available for students. The sessions are informative and cover a range of topics including: getting to know each other; facilities, campuses, learning resources and student support.

In order to monitor and manage information on student progression including attendance, coursework and assessment results, a unique student ID will be issued to all students before the induction. Analysis and information on student progression are stored and monitored online on our Student Management Platform.

Attendance is taken by visual presentation of student ID during direct contact learning methods. For online learning on our Digital Campus (MS Teams), we will issue each student with a unique electronic login. A copy of all coursework and assessment will be kept at EFI Malta and/or our Digital Campus.

EFI has established procedures for the Recognition of Accredited Prior Learning (RPL-RAPL) enabling students access to Credit Transfer based on previous formal and accredited learning. For more information, please refer to the RPL Policy Handbook.

5.3   Student Recognition and Certification

Students are issued with an annual Academic Transcripts detailing relevant personal information, programme description (includes learning outcomes), EQF level, amount of learning credit, content and student progression including results of assessment.

Upon successful completion of all compulsory assessments, students are issued with a Certification of Completion with details on the final qualification achieved and a final Academic Transcript.

A diploma supplement is provided upon request.

6. Teaching staff

Our academic staff comprise of highly experienced teachers and subject matter experts in the professional world whom have committed to teach a new generation of experts alongside their professional roles as such they are constantly up-to-date with developments in their fields and with the methodological requirements of their programmes.

Recruitment is performed on a need basis. We will advertise the need and call for application for staff on our website and invite them to send us a Cover letter and their CV. We will evaluate their application for suitability for the required role. In addition, we run an open application for all professionals interested in working with our organisation through our website, this includes extending invitations to apply to identified/known highly specialised experts.

We review all applications sent in to us. Upon receiving the cover letter and CVs of potential candidates, we review their CV to determine if they meet our selection criteria and minimum

requirements. Shortlisted applicants will be invited for an interview with the Dean of Department and Head of Institute. Successful candidates will be notified by email/call.

At minimum, our teachers have the following qualifications for the relevant levels.

Course Module EQF/MQF Level	Teaching Requirements
5	**Compulsory** • an internationally recognised Bachelor's Degree (Level 6) or equivalent in relevant field • 3 years of professional experience in relevant field **Desirable** • an internationally recognised Master's Degree (Level 7) or equivalent in relevant field • Member or Fellow of a relevant National Professional Association (e.g.: the Chartered Society of Forensic Science)
6	**Compulsory** • an internationally recognised Master's Degree (Level 7) or equivalent in relevant field • 3 years of professional experience in relevant field **Desirable** • Member or Fellow of a relevant National Professional Association (e.g.: the Chartered Society of Forensic Science)
7	**Compulsory** • an internationally recognised PhD (Level 8) or equivalent in relevant field • 5 years of professional experience in relevant field **Desirable** • Member or Fellow of a relevant National Professional Association (e.g.: the Chartered Society of Forensic Science)

In highly exceptional circumstances where formal compulsory qualifications are not met by the academic staff, we will rigorously examine the suitability of the professional taking into consideration length of professional experience and quality of contribution to the field while ensuring they meet the highest possible professional standards in their relevant field.

We employ academic staff both on a full-time, part-time and contract basis depending on requirements. All academic staff are supported in their roles through access to our Digital Campus and by our academic team. We encourage staff to proactively develop and update their knowledge by providing opportunity to attend relevant events and short courses as the need arises.

As part of our procedure to observe teaching and ensuring quality, we review our course content and material to ensure they are up-to-date and relevant every academic year. Our IT and administrative team monitor contents including class schedules, participation and engagement in our Digital Campus throughout the year. A member of our administrative team will also drop into the lab sessions periodically to observe the teaching session. In addition, we request feedback from our

students every academic year. Feedback to academic staff will be given throughout the course as the need arises. Annual feedback from students will be reported to staff by email communication.

7. Learning Resources, Student and Staff Support

When planning our learning resources and student support, we have considered the needs of a diverse student population (such as mature, part-time, employed and international students as well as students with disabilities), and the shift towards student-centred learning.

7.1   Learning Resources

Our institute will be equipped with appropriate learning resources to support students in achieving their learning outcomes. Our academic staff are responsible for identifying the need for new resources and the administrative team is responsible for allocating new resources subject to approval by the Academic Board of Directors. The facilities available to our students include

- an up to date virtual library for learning and research materials
- shared computers with internet access
- study rooms
- IT services including an electronic login into our Digital Campus
- research laboratories

Our administrative team and academic staff will be responsible for ensuring that these resources are all available at the institution. Should the need for new resources arise, the academic staff is responsible for raising the request to our administrative team.

All software will be provided by certified third-party providers who attest to having procedures in place to ensure continuity of service including backup systems with real-time mirroring of data, full/incremental backups on-site and full/incremental backups offsite on physical data.

7.2   Student Support

There is various support fit for purpose and accessible to students at European Forensic Institute. A student with a problem can refer to one of the below depending on the nature of support required.

- an Academic Advisor is available to support students' academic development. Advisors are usually teachers of a course module taken by the student or teaching assistants.
- extra tutoring sessions outside of academic requirements can be organised for students when requested.
- students with functional needs and/or disabilities will be supported by our student support team. They are welcome to raise any concerns to our SSO in person, by email or telephone who will decide on the appropriate solution including raising the issue to other members of our staff on a need basis.
- student support officer/counsellor (SSO) is available for students who may need special support such as emotional support during the course of their studies. Our diverse team include experts in social sciences and counselling, the SSO is required to have previous

experience in working with students in the same capacity and professional training in counselling.

- feedback and complaints can be sent to the Student Support Team and all issues will be investigated fairly and in a timely manner. Full details of our complaint procedure are detailed in the Student Handbook.

7.3   Staff Support

Academic Staff at European Forensic Institute are supported in their careers and/or collaboration with us through the following measures:

- Briefings are organised for all Academic Staff before the start of the Academic Year to ensure any new developments are communicated and new staff are introduced to internal procedures.
- End-of-year de-briefs are organised to wrap up the Academic year between the Head of Institution and each Academic Staff individually to reflect on the year and discuss outcomes of student surverys.
- Should additional training be required in terms of using our IT tools, internal policies or general teaching tips and tricks, EFI will dedicate resources to organise these training.

8. Information management

8.1   General Information management

All students will be issued a unique student ID including a unique electronic login to our IT learning platform on Digital Campus. The unique ID is used for collecting information including student details, attendance, coursework and assessment results. The student will be issued a student ID card at induction. Lost/misplaced IDs will need to be reported to our administrative office and replacements must be ordered from the administrative office.

In addition, students will be required to provide feedback on each course module every academic year to determine suitability and students' satisfaction levels with their chosen courses. At the end of the academic year, students will be given access to feedback forms to complete on their courses via email or on our Digital Campus. This will be stored and analyzed digitally on our Digital Campus.

Upon successful completion and final award of qualification, students will automatically join our alumni network. The main purpose of our alumni network is to facilitate and maintain contact amongst our alumni for professional and personal networking. We will maintain an email database of our alumni and send out newsletters occasionally. We will include annual surveys within newsletters to alumni to determine and monitor employment rates and career paths.

All the above information will be kept electronically by our administrative office in Malta indefinitely subject to relevant privacy laws. Information include:

Information	Method of collection	Analysis
Admission records, student details, proof of assessment	• Student ID • Attendance list • Classter	• Attendance lists (both physical and virtual) will be reviewed periodically and any discrepancies flagged • Assessments are checked to ensure the student ID matches the student's record on the assessment
Profile of the student population, including prevalence of vulnerable groups	• Student ID • Digital Campus account	• We keep a list of all our students with the student details on Classter in order to analyse our student profile
Course participation, retention and success rates	• Student ID • Attendance list • Pass rates • Digital Campus account	• We keep a list of all our students with details of their attendance and assessment results to analyse
Students' satisfaction with their programmes	• Student feedback forms	• We review students' responses to questions in the feedback form collectively to determine students' satisfaction • We also take into account any additional comments included in the feedback forms by reading the comments
Employment rates and career paths	• Alumni network newsletters • Annual alumni survey	• We analyse the results of our alumni surveys by reviewing the surveys collectively to track alumni progress

		• We also read additional comments in the surveys if any.

Collection of data such as admission records, student details, proof of assessment is primarily performed by the academic staff on a course-by-course basis.

Data management and analysis are the responsibility of our administrative team.

8.2   Digital Provision

Our transfer of knowledge sessions will be provided predominantly through digital channels – including interactive virtual classroom and on-demand access to course content. The Learning Management System (Digital Campus) we have selected is a commercially available third-party software – MS Teams. This is paired with our Student Management System (Classter).

1. Each student is provided with a unique email within our network, e.g.: N.Surname@student.eufor.eu
2. The unique email address is used as an account login to our Digital Campus allowing us to follow the activity of the user throughout the course including their attendance and virtual engagement, coursework is uploaded to the user's account
3. Our policy forbids a user to give someone his or her password or allow others to use his or her account. Users are responsible for any and all users of their account. Users are responsible for all activity on their accounts.
4. Online instructors have a responsibility to identify changes in students' activity in online courses. Examples of changes could be a sudden change in academic performance, change in writing style, and odd statements by students in discussions or email.

This cloud-based tool has been selected as it satisfies our requirements of accessibility, security, ease-of-use and reliability. Due to its popularity and wide availability, we are confident that this tool will provide the best digital training for our students. Our academic administrative team will be in charge of deploying the system and available to support any lecturer/student in addition to our IT Helpdesk.

8.3   Student Records

Digital attendance and participation will be stored on our Digital Campus.

In addition, we will maintain and retain any physical student records in our office in Malta. These include, as applicable, attendance sheets, student details including a copy of ID and Academic Transcript as proof of assessment. Electronic copies will be stored in our Digital Campus on cloud-based servers as back-up.

9. Public information

Information pertaining to programmes offered by European Forensic Institute is publicly available through our website. The information which is available include:

- title and level of the qualification, including MQF and ECTS
- duration and mode of study
- course overview
- learning outcomes of the programme
- admission requirements (selection criteria for the programme)
- course modules
- Teaching, learning and assessment procedures used
- pass rate
- further learning opportunities available to students
- information on possible career pathways available

The information published strive to be clear, accurate, objective and up-to date by reviewing them annually. We also host open days for interested students to meet our teams and speak directly if they have any questions including taking into account where we may improve the usefulness of the information provided. In addition, we maintain an email for general enquiry and prospective students are more than welcome to write to us to clarify any information in order to make an informed choice.

10. Monitoring and Periodic Review of Programmes

Annually, feedback on each course module will be requested from students, teachers and where possible, industry experts. The purpose of the feedback includes:

- ensuring courses achieve set objectives
- reviewing content of the programme in the light of latest research/practice in the sector to ensure that the programme is up to date
- responding to the changing needs of students and society

Stages	Steps taken
Planning	- We identify the changing needs of students through annual feedback. Our feedback form will include questions on how much student felt they've learnt, how appropriate do they think the content it and it will ask them for suggestions which we will take into account when reviewing feedback. - We identify the changing needs of society through working alongside experts working in the industry. We engage in conversations and discussions with experts and attend industry events and fairs around the world, when possible. - We evaluate if the aims and objectives of the programmes are being achieved by monitoring our alumni employment rates and career paths - For online learning, our IT team identifies the need to improve online platforms by working alongside platform provider – Adobe Connect
Improvement	- We will include students and staff on the action plan based on the results of our monitoring and review process through email communication of action plan when it arises - We will allocate a set time period for feedback to be received from students and staff and take them into consideration during our evaluation process

Evaluation	• Programmes are reviewed to respond to changing needs through our annual feedback process • We also engage with experts and professionals as academic staff to ensure our courses are up to date and fit for purpose
Implementation	• All changes made to our programme will be submitted to MFHEA for reaccreditation prior to implementation • Students and staff will be informed of any changes via email

11. External Quality Assurance

European Forensic Institute in Malta will undergo external quality assurance by, or with the approval of, the MFHEA on a cyclical basis according to MFHEA guidelines, once every five years.

12. Administrative and Contact Information

Website	**European Forensic Institute** https://www.eufor.eu/
Email	info@eufor.eu
Office Number	+356 27415138
European Forensic Institute Limited (Legal Office and Teaching Laboratory)	LS 2.1.13 Malta Life Sciences Park Sir Temi Zammit Buildings, SGN 3000, San Gwann Malta
European Forensic Institute Limited (Administrative Office)	302 Kappara Business Center 113, Triq Birkirkara SGN 4197, San Gwann Malta

RPL Policy Handbook

Version 1.0

The latest version of this Handbook is kept in our Digital Campus.
Always refer to the latest version on our .

Table of Contents

1. Introduction

This policy is aimed at all our current or provisional students who have completed accredited prior learning awarded by another awarding higher institution or a university (RAPL).

The European Forensic Institute's (EFI) Recognition Prior Learning (RPL) policy does not recognise non-formal or informal learning at this present time. This policy sets out how and when RPL can be used. The use of RPL is optional, and candidates can only apply for RPL against the guided learning hours required of the relevant module outline. RPL will never be applied to reduce the assessment criteria or time.

2. Scope

To ensure that credit and recognition of prior learning (RPL-RAPL) obtained through formal learning are provided in accordance with the RPL policy and the Maltese Qualifications Framework (MQF) and that the integrity of the EFI programmes is maintained. EFI will apply a coherent, impartial and transparent approach to the RPL to determine eligibility for Credit Transfer.

3. Recognition of Prior Learning principles

EFI acknowledges that learning can take place in another Higher Education Institution or a University. The main principle of this Handbook is to preserve the integrity of EFI Awards while assisting the Applicant's access to Credit Transfer based on previous formal and accredited learning. RPL is the process whereby students are discharged from part of their chosen programme of academic study by recognition of comparable learning and achievement. The RPL process ensures that students' progression or completion is not affected where their prior learning has taken place outside EFI.

This commitment enables EFI to satisfy its function of conducting an educational institution to provide excellence in study in the field of higher education, as well as comply with the *Malta Further & Higher Education Authority's RPL Guidelines*.

The RPL at EFI is based on the primary goal to award prior learning, ensuring:

   a) the student is not disadvantaged in completing the expected learning outcomes for the module/s in consideration;
   b) the integrity, quality and standards of the programme is preserved;
   c) the recognition of learning regardless of how and where it was gained, provided that the learning is accredited, relevant and current;
   d) the procedure is equitable and transparent and applied consistently and fairly.

The assessment of a student's prior learning is carried out upon specific request by the student and based on the documentation and evidence provided by the student ("Applicant" in this document).

The RPL policy in place in EFI includes a process that requires an evidence-based academic assessment about equivalence of learning, which is completed by an evaluator whose

qualifications align with the contents of the module's descriptors, and in collaboration with the Academic Management staff.

Academic staff involved in the RPL procedure will receive any required training, including those organised by MFHEA in the related topic.

Should the members of staff identify any further gaps in knowledge, skills, or competence, this should be reported to EFI in a timely manner to ensure appropriate training and support can be provided where required.

The evaluator will consider the following information relating to the specific modules of prior learning:

- course objectives
- learning outcomes
- assessment methods, including written exams, research assignments and other assignments
- course materials
- duration of the course module, especially the total contact hours
- credits (ECTS) and level of the course (against the MQF)
- general educational practices and standards of the provider
- practical sessions components (if applicable)
- course entry requirements (if applicable)
- pre-requisites (if applicable)

Based on the above-mentioned information, the evaluator will determine:

- whether the prior learning aligns with the design and level of preparedness needed for EFI programmes, for example by considering whether the prior learning:

  - ✓ is current or out of date
  - ✓ is consistent with the MQF level involved
  - ✓ displays the necessary foundations of learning, including sufficient knowledge in relevant principles and making sure it is not limited to evaluate skills and competences

- how the scope, depth or learning outcomes of prior learning compares with that of EFI programme/s

- whether the prior learning was carried out in an environment that would not meet the relevant requirements of the Higher Education Institution framework for a course of study

- whether the prior learning engaged with advanced knowledge and enquiry at a level consistent with the level of relevant EFI programme or the expected learning outcomes

- whether the assessments associated with prior learning demonstrate the achievement of learning outcomes appropriate to the relevant EFI programme

The evaluator will ensure that:

- excessive credit is not granted for lower MQF levels of learning e.g., granting credit for a module of Level 6 learning in a Level 7 programme

- RPL is not provided where students are not sufficiently prepared for undertaking the relevant EFI programme

The Dean of the relevant Department together with the Academic Manager will ensure that RPL assessment decisions are consistent with the procedure and contents of relevant programme and that this policy is applied consistently across students. Consistency is ensured by the overview of the Academic Manager.

Whether or not credit is granted, the outcome of the RPL application is provided in writing (via email) to the student within 28 days of the initial application, or of the date on which additional information was requested by EFI. The student will receive a report with comments and the decision made, based on the documentation provided.

A student who is dissatisfied with an RPL decision can request a review of the decision by the relevant Dean of Department only in the case students provide additional documentation supporting their request of re-evaluation. The re-evaluation decision will be final, regardless of the outcome.

On applying for RPL, the applicant shall pay a fee equal to € 50,00 per ECTS (e.g.: € 500,00 for recognition of 10 ECTS).

In case RPL procedure is completed, students will be charged for each academic year by the number of ECTS taken (price per ECTS* Euro 110, starting from A.Y. 2023-24) up to a maximum of the annual tuition fee* for the related programme of study.

*Please note annual tuition fee and price per credit is subject to change; always refer to the latest information available on Classter.

Generally, RPL will be provided only for equivalent learning at the same MQF level. For example, for a biology subject at the MQF Level 5, credit will only be given for an MQF level 5 Biology subject.

Whether credit is provided will depend on the currency and relevance of the prior learning therefore, credit will not be provided where the knowledge is not considered to be current and/or relevant.

Credit will not be given for a unit completed more than **10 years before** the date of the RPL application.

Credit may be provided for prior formal learning provided by:

- ✓ a university or
- ✓ other higher education provider

The above rules also apply to applications for credit for formal studies completed overseas. If the official documentation from the other provider is in a language other than English, a

complete English translation of the documentation made through Certified Translation must be provided by the student to EFI with the RPL application.

4. RPL Procedure

It is at the discretion of the Head of Institution to decide whether to grant RPL, all requests will be considered on an individual basis.

The application Form for RPL is available in EFI Digital Campus (Microsoft Forms | Microsoft 365). The Applicant shall log-in to Microsoft Forms | Microsoft 365 using their Institutional credentials, where possible, and fill in the Form in all parts where required (RPL application form - click here)

All applications must include supporting evidence of the relevant prior learning. The evidence must detail how each of the intended learning outcomes for the module is met by the prior learning, and level of prior achievement.

Evidence of prior formal learning include (but it is not limited to):

- Official Transcripts for all previous studies
- Module outline, which includes a detailed guide of course content covered, learning outcomes, required readings and assessment methods
- Duration of course module and number of ECTS
- Information on course entry requirements (if applicable)
- information on pre-requisites (if applicable)

Note: supporting documents in a language other than English must be complemented with a certified English translation

4.1 Assessment Criteria

In the evaluator assessment, consideration is given to prior learning based on:

- **Currency.** Formal learning achieved within ten (10) years of the date of application for credit will generally be considered current
- **Relevancy.** Formal learning will be considered relevant where:
    - ✓ there is evidence to demonstrate that the Applicant has achieved a quality and standard of learning equivalent/comparable to appropriate level for the course
    - ✓ the Applicant has achieved the learning outcomes of specific module/s of the degree. Learning outcomes and other information on modules are available on EFI website and Digital Campus
    - ✓ the Applicant prior learning is equivalent in discipline content, depth and scope

4.2 Minimum Requirements

Applicants will start the procedure for <u>a minimum of 4 ECTS</u> and, in general, they can request recognition through RPL for **<u>up to 50% of the total credits</u>** required to conclude any programme in EFI (e.g.: 90 ECTS for MQF Level 6 programmes and from 15 to 45 ECTS for MQF

Level 7 programmes). Students must complete at least 50% of the overall ECTS of the chosen course of study to conclude the programme in EFI.

4.3 Deadlines

4.3.1 RPL first request

Applicant can submit the RPL request following the below deadlines:

- between 1 September and 31 October (before the start/beginning of the Academic Year)
- between 1 February and 31 March (before the start/beginning of Term 2 of relevant Academic Year)

4.3.2 RPL appeal

Should the outcome of the RPL be a non-recognition and the student be dissatisfied with the result, EFI provides for an appeal process. The appeal process will be activated when:

- the student sends the request for appeal via email to registration@eufor.eu using their institutional email address
- the student present additional supporting documentation
- the student appeal within 10 business days from reception of RPL outcome

After the request of appeal is submitted, the applicant will receive a final report between 15 and 25 days from submission of the additional documentation, in the same manner as per the RPL procedure.

To the RPL appeal process, an administrative fee of EUR 50.00 is applied.

4.4 Applicant's Portfolio

The Applicant's Portfolio is a collection of documents which, in the case of an RPL claim, is submitted by the Applicant to demonstrate competence for learning outcomes.

Portfolio shall include the following **MANDATORY** documents (minimum):

a) official transcripts that include date of assessment and final grade
b) module/s outline, including (but not limited to):
   i. course content covered
   ii. learning outcomes
   iii. required readings
   iv. assessment methods
c) Duration of course module (contact hours and total learning hours) and number of ECTS attached to the module
d) Information on course entry requirements (if applicable)
e) information on pre-requisites (if applicable)

Other supporting documentation may include (list non exhaustive):

a) references
b) authenticated reports
c) project work

Any required support in the compilation of students RPL portfolio will be provided by EFI Admission Officer. Admission officer shall be contacted via email to the following address: registration@eufor.eu

4.5 RPL limits

The following limits apply to RPL, and credit counted towards the completion of a program:

1. No Credit Transfer will be granted for prior learning with failing grades, or in any way equivalent to <40/100
2. For the purposes of credit, successfully completed learning is deemed to be current for a maximum period of ten (10) calendar years from the time of achievement of credits
3. No credit will be granted where prior learning is considered not to be relevant to the chosen course of study
4. Students are not permitted to use credit twice (double counting). This means that credit cannot be transferred where it has previously been used for another award
5. Credit Transfer is only available for whole subjects; credit for part of a subject is not available
6. Credit for prior formal learning cannot be recognised if not provided by a university or other higher education institution recognised by MFHEA

5. Definitions

The following definitions apply for the purpose of this Policy:

i. **Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)**: the process for recognising learning that has come from experience and/or previous formal, non-formal and informal learning contexts. This includes knowledge and skills gained within school, college and university and outside formal learning situations as through life and work experiences *[SCQF definition 2010]*
ii. **Recognition of Accredited Prior Learning (RAPL)**: a process that involves assessment of an individual's accredited prior learning and is awarded MQF credit points toward an award or qualification that they are then offered exemptions or advanced entry to
iii. **Applicant**: a person who is making a claim for an application for RPL for the purpose of Credit Transfer
iv. **Award**: the qualification resulting from successful completion of a specific module
v. **Credit**: the value assigned for the recognition of equivalence in learning outcomes between different Awards

vi.   **Credit Transfer**: a process that provides students with consistent Credit outcomes for a module or modules of a Programme based on identified equivalence in Learning Outcomes. It takes place when an individual has gained a formal programme of study and has received formal credit and is looking to gain entry at an advanced stage or exemption from components of another programme of study where the learning outcomes of the programme of study match the learning outcomes of the new programme of study

vii. **Programme:** a sequence of study which leads to a Higher Education Award that sits on the MQF

viii. **Formal Learning**: learning that takes place within the context of programmes delivered by learning providers through a structured program of learning that leads to the full or partial achievement of an officially accredited qualification (award of ECTS credit points and pegged to an MQF level)

ix.   **Learning Outcomes:** the expression of the set of knowledge, skills and the application of the knowledge and skills (competences) a person has acquired and is able to demonstrate as a result of learning

x.   **Level**: the level of an Award reflects the relative complexity and / or depth of its Module Learning Outcomes, and is expressed according to the various MQF levels. The level at which a unit is taught indicates the amount of prior knowledge required to study it successfully

xi.   **Portfolio**: A collection of documents which, in the case of an RPL claim, is submitted by the applicant to demonstrate competence for learning outcomes. It could include a variety of documents such as prior formal education certificates, evidence such as references, reports, examples of work and reflective statements etc (not an exhaustive list)

xii. **Prior Learning:** learning that is Formal and which is evidenced, current and relevant, and has taken place:
   a. outside EFI; and
   b. within another Higher Education Institution or a University

6. Data retention and data management

RPL decisions are recorded using EFI's record management system. All credit granted is identified in a student's record of results. Any ECTS that add up to whole subject will be added in a separate row in the Transcripts of records with "pass" mark and "RPL examined" in the comment section.