

BioArte: Institute for Sustainable Industrial Biotechnology

Internal Quality Assurance Policy (Version 1)

June 2020

Contents

1. Policy for Internal Quality Assurance.....	3
2. Institutional Probity.....	5
3. Design and approval of programmes	7
4. Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment.....	9
5. Student admission, progression, recognition and certification	11
6. Teaching Staff.....	13
7. Learning resources and student support	14
9. Public Information	16
10. Ongoing monitoring and periodic review of programmes.....	17
Annexes.....	18
Annex 1. Complaints Procedure Policy.....	18
Annex 2. Data Protection Policy	19
Annex 3. Enquiries and Appeals Procedures Policy	20
Annex 4. Equality and Diversity Policy.....	21
Annex 5. Fire and safety procedure.....	22
Annex 6. Maladministration and Malpractice Policy	23

1. Policy for Internal Quality Assurance

The BioArte Institute for Sustainable Industrial Biotechnology (herein after referred to as BioArte) operates a robust internal quality assurance system to maintain the consistency and accuracy of assessments. The Institute's Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) is the process of ensuring that training delivering and assessment practice is monitored continuously in order to meet the Maltese and European Standards. The process is fully compliant with Subsidiary Legislation 327.433 on Licensing, Accreditation and Quality Assurance and in line with the National Quality Assurance Framework for Further and Higher Education.

The Institute is fully committed to the development of an internal culture which will instate the importance of quality delivering and assure the continuous quality development of programs. It will regularly review its practices in order to continually improve the effectiveness at all levels.

This policy applies to all staff of the Institute, to the management, lecturing staff and to all students.

The implementation of this policy will be monitored by the Institute Director and remain under constant review of the management of Institute.

Policy scope:

- The assessment practices and decisions are evaluated and findings are acted upon to ensure standardisation, consistency and fairness in assessment
- To provide a consistent check on quality of course delivery, the fairness of marking, grading and overall assessment of student's work
- To ensure that valid assessment decisions are reached for all students
- To meet and act upon the requirements and standards of the National Commission for Further and Higher Education (NCFHE)
- To develop and implement strategies for continuous enhancement of quality

Institute Director (ID):

The Institute Director (ID) has the responsibility to assure that the IQA policy is being followed and that appropriate monitoring is being carried out, ensuring that all assessments are correctly judged by suitably qualified and occupationally competent staff and all processes are accurately recorded to provide a clear audit trail.

The Institute Director (ID) shall:

- Implement the institute's development plan
- Regulates the programme of study, the entry regulations, the methods of assessment
- Constantly review and monitor the programme performance
- Conduct meetings with institute's staff to discuss and evaluate team's quality assurance practice
- Conduct performance management processes, including lesson observations
- Monitor daily the effectiveness of the quality assurance policy
- Review the content of the student's questionnaires

- Ensure that appropriate evidence is being correctly completed and submitted
- Carry out risk assessment of premises for learning and assessment activities
- Advise institute owners of any issues, developments or problems that need intervention
- Establish procedures for ensuring academic integrity and freedom
- Appoint new members of staff in academic and administrative positions
- Considers students requests

The Policy for Internal Quality Assurance will be made public and will form part of the Institute's strategic management. Internal stakeholders will constantly develop and implement this policy through appropriate structures and processes.

In addition to the Internal Quality Assurance Policy, the Institute will also have in place several other policies and documentation, specifically designed to ensure proper effectiveness of programme, such as:

- Data Protection Policy
- Enquiries and Appeals Procedures
- Complaints Procedure
- Maladministration and Malpractice Policy
- Plagiarism Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy

All the policies listed above are provided as an annex to the IQA document and referred to in the sections that follow which cover all the quality assurance standards systematically.

2. Institutional Probity

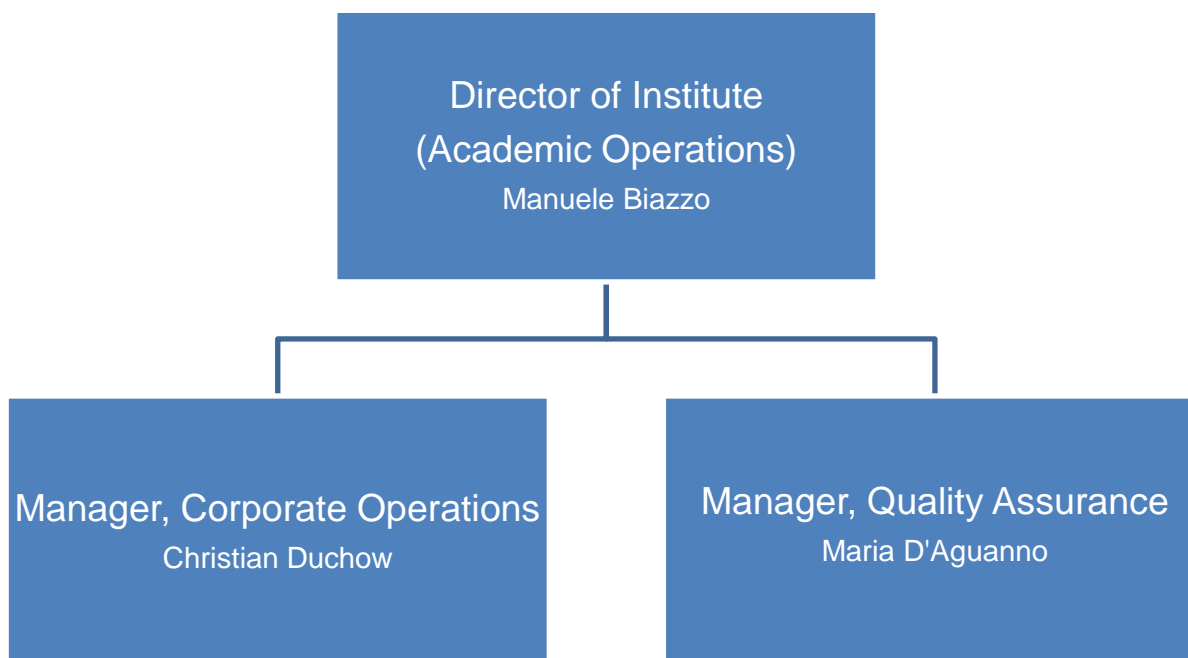
The Institute Director is responsible for the financial budget and its execution. While it is not expected that BioArte generates an annual turnover of Euro 50,000 in its first year of operations, annual audited accounts will be maintained in order to ensure full regulatory compliance as is expected of education and training institutions.

All headship positions are occupied by fully qualified personnel (minimum pegged at MQF Level 7 within the Malta Qualifications Framework) and have, at least, 8 years of work experience within the sector of operation.

Additionally, in order to ensure sustainability and full compliance with institutional probity standard, all new and/or replacement headship positions at BioArte will adhere to the following minimum conditions:

- a) MQF Level 7 qualification of at least 90 ECTS
- b) 8 years of work experience
- c) 5 years experience in a management position

The organigram below presents the structure of BioArte, together with the names of the personnel occupying the headship positions.



The lean structure of this organization allows for the distribution of responsibilities associated with the quality structure of the organization as presented below:

Function	Main responsibilities	Alignment with Standards
Director of Institute [Academic Operations]	Strategic direction Institutional Probity Legal representation Design and development of programmes Learning, teaching and assessment Teaching staff Ongoing and periodic review of programmes	Standard 1 Standard 2 Standard 3 Standard 4 Standard 6 Standard 10
Corporate Operations [Corporate Manager]	Admission, progression, recognition and certification Learning resources and student support Information management Public information	Standard 5 Standard 7 Standard 8 Standard 9
Internal Quality Assurance [QA Manager]	Policy for internal quality assurance Cyclical external quality assurance Sample process checks on operational functions (academic and corporate)	Standard 1 Standard 11 Standard 1 to 10

3. Design and approval of programmes

The design and development of academic programmes is conducted internally under the direction of the academic head. BioArte staff are equipped with vast experience and knowledge associated within the field and provide a solid and competent team of experts.

The design of the programme is dependent on market research that is an integral part of the strategic management of the Institute. Additionally, this market research is also reinforced through business meetings, conferences and fora in order to obtain feedback on the design and validity of training need.

The programme design and development process follows a step by step procedure as tabulated below:

Step	Task Description
1	Determination of main design course parameters, namely: <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Type of courseb. Mode of deliveryc. Title of qualification/awardd. MQF Levele. Credit structure and distributionf. Course durationg. Course rationaleh. Identification of target group/s
2	Development of course objectives, entry requirements and associated relationship to existing occupations in the labour market
3	Formulation of teaching, learning and assessment strategies
4	Identification of fully competent teaching staff (in alignment with Standard 6) and description of minimum qualifications expected

5	Deceleration of internal quality assurance system at a programme level
6	Development of module of study content, namely: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Learning outcomes b. Module description c. Learning and assessment Hours (Credit Distribution) d. Teaching methods e. Assessment methods f. Reading list
7	Internal review process conducted by QA manager to ensure all of the above steps have been conducted
8	Internal approval by academic head

Once the above process has been completed and the development process has been declared fit for purpose, the programme is submitted to NCFHE for accreditation and ultimately approval.

4. Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment

BioArte's main strength lies within the technical competence of its staff that are engaged on research projects related to cellular pharmacology. Through a combination of learning that is work-based and traditional teaching methods, BioArte's strategy of teaching and learning is based on three main pillars:

1. Transfer of knowledge
2. State of the art equipment and laboratories
3. Value added research projects and tasks

Within this context, BioArte is in a strong position to apply teaching methods through an interdisciplinary approach through a combination of forms, including:

- Traditional lectures
- Supervised practical sessions in the lab
- Problem based learning
- Project work
- Working groups

Teaching and learning are also reinforced through assessment methods which are both formative and summative. To this end, assessment at BioArte is seen as a process for learning and will take any of the following main modes:

- Written tasks and assignments
- Practical tasks
- Presentations
- Time constrained tests

The assessments that are developed are also internally checked by the QA manager in order to ensure that all assessments are aligned with the stipulated programme learning outcomes in the approved and accredited programmes. Additionally, the QA manager also checks that all the following criteria are checked when verified assessments before being issued to students:

- Assessment tasks are of the adequate MQF level
- Suitable time-frame and/or duration exists for completing assessment
- Clear tasks/questions are formulated
- Assessments for a given module cover all the learning outcomes within the module of study
- Overall quality of assessment is fit for purpose

Feedback from the QA manager is ultimately provided to respective teaching staff that have set the assessments in order to improve the quality of the assessment before being given to students.

A specific policy, titled “Maladministration and Malpractice” also provides BioArte with a robust internal quality assurance mechanism to avoid plagiarism and cheating and is presented in Annex 6 of this IQA document.

5. Student admission, progression, recognition and certification

This section covers functions related to registry and falls within the responsibility of the corporate manager. BioArte follows a step by step procedure leading to admission and registration of students:

Step	Description
1	Students enquire on programme offered by BioArte
2	Information/guidance session provided to interested students
3	Students apply for programme
4	Corporate manager conducts check on entry requirements stipulated as per programme application
5	If entry requirements check is positive, students are informed of this check and are asked to pay a deposit on programme fee (20% of total cost)
6	Once payment is received, corporate manager registers students and provides a unique code
7	Students are then provided with all information on the programme in terms of schedule and induction programme

BioArte does not apply a procedure to recognize prior learning. All students are required to satisfy entry requirements and are asked to produce evidence of their formal qualifications (including an MQRIC statement for foreign based qualifications) and employment history sheet.

Student profiles and records are kept at the BioArte operating base in the administrative offices in Mosta, Malta. A dedicated student database serves to keep student data and records in electronic form and includes the following information:

- Student details
- Qualifications
- Updated CV
- Assessment grades and records acquired during the programme at BioArte
- Corporate reports
- Student attendance rates and performance

On successful completion of all modules of study within a programme, QA manager conducts internal quality checks of the assessment grading. Students are awarded a certificate of competence by BioArte (signed by Institute Director and Academic Head) clearly stating the MQF level and title of qualification/award. Additionally, the total credit value (ECTS) is also stated in the certificate.

6. Teaching Staff

Teaching staff at BioArte are engaged on a contract for service basis. Contract clearly stipulates the obligations of the teaching staff member. Teaching staff are required to possess the following minimum conditions:

- At least an MQF level 7 qualification in subject related area
- 5 years of work experience within the related field
- 3 years of teaching, training or mentoring experience

All teaching staff are expected to keep updated in their area of specialization through research activities, work practice and CPD initiatives. The latter may include formal training/upskilling programmes of study, seminars, and conferences.

ICP does not offer pedagogical training to its teaching staff; however, a dedicated induction programme to all teaching staff engaged with BioArte is conducted. The induction programme is conducted jointly by institute director, academic head, corporate manager and QA manager and focuses on the following areas:

1. ICP strategy and ethos
2. Teaching and learning strategy
3. Assessment methods and procedures
4. Internal Quality Assurance
5. Operational affairs

As part of the IQA structure, BioArte also monitors the delivery of the teaching staff through the following methods:

- Group meetings
- Observation of lectures/sessions
- IQA checks on assessments developed
- Feedback from students

7. Learning resources and student support

BioArte dedicates 10% of the budget plan towards learning resources for students to support their competency development. The resources available to students include:

- Specialised textbooks
- Access to labs and equipment under supervision
- Journals and peer reviewed articles
- Customised notes and presentations

BioArte is also aiming to further upgrade the learning resources for students and teaching staff by providing online access to journals, articles and e-books. A dedicated IT infrastructure will also be developed to provide online tutoring support.

Students requiring non-academic support are required to make a request to the corporate manager. Although BioArte does not have full-time staff specifically dedicated to support functions related to counseling and other psycho-social domains, BioArte is fully committed to facilitate this service to students that require this service by facilitating the process with external advisors and/or professionals in the field. As part of the institutes policy, BioArte is guided by and Equality and Diversity policy which is presented in Annex 4 of this document.

BioArte is also guided by a complaints procedure policy (Annex 1) and an enquires and appeals policy (Annex 3) to handle effectively student complaints, grievances and appeals. Additionally, the QA manager also monitors and reviews the procedures associated with student support to ensure full compliance with quality standards are met.

8. Information Management

BioArte's data and information are managed by the corporate manager and are guided by a Data Protection Policy (Annex 2). The following data is collected and compiled:

- Students data and profile (upon admission and registration)
- Attendance rates (during the programme delivery)
- Performance rates (by the end of programme delivery)
- Student satisfaction feedback (at the end of the programme delivery)
- Tracer studies (1 year after completing the programme)

BioArte's top management are responsible to analyse the data being collected and compiled through dedicated quarterly meetings. The analysis exercise provides the basis for an internal report, defining key recommendations for improvement. This report will be compiled on an annual basis and will form a central part of BioArte's IQA structure.

9. Public Information

BioArte's website, which is maintained by the corporate manager, is the main tool to provide updated and clear information in the public domain. The corporate manager ensures that BioArte's website is maintained and updated regularly (on a monthly basis) with the following main information:

- Strategic objectives
- Programme information (title and level; duration and schedule; programme learning outcomes; assessment and teaching methods; further opportunities for learning; pass rates)
- Application process and forms
- Current research activities
- Learning venue and facilities
- Other information such as contact details and student support line

10. Ongoing monitoring and periodic review of programmes

BioArte's QA manager will be responsible for the ongoing monitoring and periodic review of all learning/academic and corporate activity. The main monitoring activity includes:

- Teaching delivery and implementation
- Student feedback and support mechanisms
- Management meetings
- Meetings with teaching staff
- Checking of information management
- Review of public information
- Quality check on assessment development

BioArte shall constantly monitor the development of the courses offered and all the changes in requirements for the delivery of the programme. It will constantly adapt its strategy to the standards and regulations of the accreditation bodies and will contribute to the development of a national culture focused on quality provision.

BioArte shall ensure that all provided courses and allocated resources are fit for the purpose, are functioning effectively and are sustainable according to the Maltese and European education strategies.

The programmes and teaching staff shall undergo period reviews and evaluations, as an important part of the quality assurance procedures, which will serve as an assurance that the programmes offered are of constant and improved quality, of appropriate academic standard but will also contribute to the ever changing needs of the society.

BioArte's accredited programmes will also be reviewed at least every three years. The review process will follow the full process as stipulated in Section 3 to ensure that the programme objectives, strategies and content is fully updated with changing training needs. This effectively means that BioArte is committed to submit its programmes to NCFHE for programme (re) accreditation.

Annexes

Annex 1. Complaints Procedure Policy

The BioArte: Institute for Sustainable Industrial Biotechnology is committed to providing a quality service and products to all customers. The aim of this procedure is to ensure a consistent and open approach to addressing complaints and in a manner which facilitates conciliation and a timely resolution.

Please note where the complaint is in effect dissatisfaction with the process of assessment marking, the Enquiries and Appeals Procedures Policy should be followed. Where the complaint relates to alleged malpractice or maladministration, the learner should follow the process communicated through the Malpractice and Maladministration Policy. Where the complaint is about the promotion, delivery or quality assurance of courses, the Complaints Procedure Policy should be followed.

Procedure:

The learner should raise his/her concern in the first instance with the person involved or the Institute's administrator, as soon as possible after the incident.

The administrator will make every reasonable effort to resolve the issue within 5 working days of being made aware it.

If the learner wishes to make a formal complaint, a written communication should be sent via email or post. In the written communication should be included:

- name, address and telephone number of the person raising the complaint
- a clear description of the complaint
- copies of any relevant correspondence
- any other relevant information

No complaints will be accepted if submitted by other learners, by family members or other third parties. All complaints will be dealt with as quickly as possible.

Possible Outcomes:

- The complaint is not upheld:
 - o If a complaint is not upheld, this procedure is officially closed. The Institute may wish to return to a process of informal discussion regarding any outstanding issues
- The complaint is upheld:
 - o If a complaint is upheld then the Institute will take appropriate action, but will not discuss with the complainant any disciplinary action in which it may engage with Institute's staff or associates or sanctions it has taken.

Annex 2. Data Protection Policy

BioArte is fully compliant with the Data Protection Act. The Institute will follow procedures aiming to ensure that all employees, contractors, or partners of the Institute who have access to any personal data held by or on behalf of BioArte, are fully aware of and abide by their duties and responsibilities under the Act.

Statement of Policy

In order to operate efficiently, the Institute has to collect and use information about everyone it works with. These may include learners and prospective learners, past and prospective employees, clients, customers, and suppliers. In addition, it may be required by law to collect and use information in order to comply with accreditation requirement. This personal information must be handled and dealt with properly, however it is collected, recorded and used.

The Institute regards the lawful and correct treatment of personal information as very important to its successful operations. It will ensure that it treats personal information lawfully and correctly.

Article 7 of the Data Protection Act lists the requirements for processing, where the main purpose of these principles is to protect the interest of the individuals about whom personal data is processed. To ensure compliance with the Act, the Institute shall ensure that:

- Personal data is processed fairly and lawfully.
- Personal data is always processed in accordance with good practice.
- Personal data is only collected for specific, explicitly stated and legitimate purposes.
- Personal data is not processed for any purpose that is incompatible with that for which the information is collected.
- Personal data that is processed is adequate and relevant in relation to the purposes of the processing.
- No more personal data is processed than is necessary having regard to the purposes of the processing.
- Personal data that is processed is correct and, if necessary, up to date.
- All reasonable measures are taken to complete, correct, block or erase data to the extent that such data is incomplete or incorrect, having regard to the purposes for which they are processed.
- Personal data is not kept for a period longer than is necessary, having regard to the purposes for which they are processed.

Annex 3. Enquiries and Appeals Procedures Policy

The outcomes of the Institute's assessment decisions are based on impartial, reliable, fair and valid judgements and aim to ensure that the decisions affecting learners are processed according to stated standards. Nevertheless, there may be occasions when the Institute's decision is questioned. To allow learners to enquire about or appeal to BioArte against quality assurance outcomes or other decisions, we have clear procedures for the appellant to follow. These include:

An **Enquiry**, which can be made when a learner contests the assessment marking of the lecturer and can prove that assessment' decision has not met the unit standard. The enquiry is dealt with by the internal verifier of the specific module.

An **Appeal**, which can be made by a learner against an Institute's decision regarding his/her enquiry. It is dealt with by the Institute Director.

The enquiries and appeals procedures are intended to ensure that any communication received by BioArte under this policy is dealt with quickly, fairly and effectively. The Institute aims to resolve issues promptly. However, these matters can be complex and may require scrutiny of extensive documentation. The Institute will aim to reach its final conclusion within the published timescales outlined below.

The Institute will only consider an enquiry if the following conditions have been met:

- the enquiry is submitted in writing to the Institute's administrator within 10 working days of the receipt of the assessment marking by the learner.
- the enquiry includes the grounds for the appeal and any supporting documentation.
- the Institute does not accept enquiries from other learners, from family members or other third parties.

The Institute shall review the enquiry and communicate an outcome within 5 working days from receipt of the enquiry.

In case the learner is not satisfied with the outcome, he may submit an appeal directly to the Institute Director, following the same procedure stated above.

The Institute Director shall review the appeal and communicate an outcome within 7 working days from receipt of the appeal. This stage is the final step in the appeals process and a final decision will be made regarding the outcome of the initial enquiry.

Annex 4. Equality and Diversity Policy

Equality of opportunity is a fundamental principle of BioArte Institute for Sustainable Industrial Biotechnology provision. This policy statement describes how it will adhere to the diversity and equality legislation and ensure equal opportunities in terms of access to its qualifications and assessment.

The Institute is committed to equal opportunities both as an employer, when carrying out all of its regulated functions and in the wider context of education and training.

As an awarding organization, BioArte wishes to ensure that there is no discrimination against learners because of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnerships, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or beliefs, sex, sexual orientation and/or political opinion or persuasion.

In order to meet this commitment, the Institute shall:

- All employees and lecturers will ensure all barriers to entry, studying, assessment are mitigated.
- All Institute's personnel is aware of the content of this policy and receive relevant training.
- Learners will be fully informed about the equality and diversity policy.
- The policy is constantly reviewed and update according to the current equal opportunities legislation.
- All processes concerned with assessment are carried out in a fair and objective manner.
- All written units and assignments comply with the equality and diversity policy.

Learners who have issues regarding access to learning and assessment will in the first instance normally contact their programme administrator. If concerns persist, a learner can also contact the Institute Director directly.

Annex 5. Fire and safety procedure

This procedure describes the steps to follow in event of a fire or fire drill, for the evacuation of the Institute personnel and students from the site in a safe and timely manner.

The Institute has trained employees who are part of an emergency response team. The lecturers shall be deemed to be an extension to such team insofar as managing the safe and efficient evacuation of students from the premises in case of fire or general emergency.

Before each lecture starts, the lecturers will take 5 minutes and remind students of the emergency evacuation drill. A summary of this procedure will be displayed at the auditorium exit door.

Various alarm points are found in the building, which will be used to alert the staff in case of a fire or emergency situation, including any uncontained leaks. Upon hearing the alarm go on and maintained for more than 10 seconds (meaning it is not a drill), students and lecturers are to calmly stop what they are doing and proceed to the nearest exit.

The lecturer will gather the students and make their way to the Assembly Point situated outside the building, making sure all doors and windows are closed behind.

Everyone shall exit in a quiet and orderly fashion by the safest and quickest route. The fire warden shall check the toilets and store areas on their way out of the building.

Once at the assembly point, the lecturer shall conduct a call roll of the students.

In case of a real emergency, the Emergency Response Team members shall move the staff and students from the assembly point and further away from the factory grounds.

No staff member or student shall leave the assembly point or return to the building until clearance is given by the emergency response team leader.

Attendance sheet: It is important to note the function of the attendance sheet. It helps the lecturers get a quick view of who is in the Institute premises.

It is of utmost importance that the lifts are NOT used during an emergency evacuation. Use the stairs and follow the emergency exit signs.

Annex 6. Maladministration and Malpractice Policy

Suspicion of malpractice or maladministration may arise from a variety of sources of information for example during the assessment of learner work, analysing plagiarism reports or assessment records.

The policy sets out the principles on how the Institute should deal with such cases and the steps which must be followed when reporting suspected or actual cases of malpractice and maladministration.

Definitions of Malpractice

For the purposes of this policy 'Malpractice' will be defined as:

'Non-compliance with the regulations pertaining to the assessment process, which may adversely affect the integrity of a qualification, its assessment and the validity of learner certificates'.

Malpractice may include a range of issues from failure to maintain appropriate records or systems to the deliberate falsification of records in order to claim certificates.

Examples of Institute malpractice:

- repeated short-notice cancellation of external verifier;
- continued failure to meet Institute's requirements regarding assessment and internal verification;
- using threatening or abusive behaviour towards staff or lecturers, either in person or via email or telephone;
- inventing or changing judgements for internally assessed work, without following agreed internal policies and processes;
- repeated incidences of insufficient evidence of the learners' achievements to justify the marks given or assessment decisions made etc.

Examples of learner malpractice:

- Cheating – including:
 - o communicating with or copying the work of another learner during an examination;
 - o introducing written or printed material into an examination room (when prohibited);
 - o possession of any materials not permitted in the room, such as electronic devices including mobile phones, personal organisers, books, dictionaries or calculators (when prohibited);
- Collusion - when a learner submits work as their own, when in reality it is done in collaboration with another person. It also applies to a learner that permits another learner to copy all or part of their work and submits it as an original piece of work;

- Falsifying Data - This could take place in research projects when learners gather and use primary data to support an argument;
- Ghosting - This occurs when a learner submits work as their own although it has been produced in whole or part by another person on their behalf or has been bought from the internet;
- Plagiarism - the presentation of work by learners as their own etc.

Definition of Maladministration

For the purposes of this policy this is defined as:

‘Any activity, neglect, default or other practices that result in the Institute not complying with the set requirements for delivery and assessment of qualifications’.

Examples of maladministration:

- Delay in issuing certificates;
- Inadequate record keeping;
- Intentionally making misleading affirmations;
- Unreasonable delays in responding to requests etc.

Process

An annual register of malpractice and maladministration cases should be kept, which will also include the cases that were found not proven. This will help ensure that procedures are applied properly and fairly.

The policy will be constantly reviewed as to ensure that followed procedures are consistent to the accreditation requirements.

In all cases, until an investigation has been completed and the allegation or suspicion proved, the Institute shall use the terms ‘alleged malpractice or maladministration’ or ‘suspected malpractice or maladministration’, in relation to the case.

Allegations should be made in writing. They should include:

- Learner’s full name, address and student ID number;
- Details of affected qualification or service;
- Nature of the suspected malpractice or maladministration;
- Details of any previous mitigation, if occurred;
- Name and role of persons involved in the allegation.

Procedures to be followed

These procedures are put in place in order to cover a wide range of circumstances related to:

- The subject of the allegation
- The person making the allegation

- The nature and gravity of the allegation

1. Alleged Malpractice by Learners

The Institute shall first make an investigation of incidents. Following this, the Institute shall:

- inform the learner in writing of the nature of the alleged or suspected malpractice, of the procedures that will be followed, and the possible penalties if malpractice is proved
- investigate the allegation or suspicion
- allow the learner to contest or refute the allegation or suspicion, in writing or at a hearing with the Programme Manager/Director of Institute
- allow the learner to be accompanied by a friend at the hearing
- make a decision based on the investigation and/or hearing
- inform the learner of the outcome in writing
- keep a full record of the case, including:
 - o details of the facts
 - o names of all people involved in the case and their roles
 - o copies of all written statements
 - o details of the investigation
 - o records of hearing, if occurred
 - o copy of the work which is subject to the allegation
 - o record of the decision taken
 - o record of confirmed penalty

The following penalties may be imposed, depending on the nature and gravity of the malpractice:

- a written warning
- not completing the module unit
- not achieving the qualification
- disqualification from the qualification concerned
- a combination of two or more of the above
- other actions

2. Alleged malpractice or maladministration by Institute's employees

Upon receipt of the written allegation or suspicion, the Institute will conduct an investigation; will determine the outcome and the penalty and will take appropriate measures, as per the Institute's procedures and employment regulations.

Where the malpractice or maladministration appears to involve a criminal offence, the institute shall report the case to the police.

At all times the Institute will ensure that the personnel assigned to the investigation have the appropriate level of training and competence and they have had no previous involvement or personal interest in the matter.

During the investigation the employee(s) may be suspended or moved to other duties until the investigation is complete.

If the investigation confirms that malpractice or maladministration has taken place, the Institute shall take any actions necessary to:

- safeguard the integrity, validity or reliability of any assessment process and/or the validity of any certificates
- to protect the interests of learners
- to maintain public confidence in the Institute
- to maintain the Institute's status as an awarding organization

The actions will include amendments as appropriate concerning:

- aspects of the employee qualification development
- delivery of the modules
- awarding arrangements
- assessment and/or monitoring arrangements
- internal operational procedures
- staff recruitment and training

in order to prevent any similar issues from recurring.

Appeals against Sanctions

When an Institute employee or learner wishes to appeal against the decision, they can appeal by writing to the Programme Manager/Director of Institute. The appeal must be made within 5 working days of the notification of the outcome and sanctions.

In the appeal should be included:

- The reason/s why the employee/learner believes the original decision and sanctions were not justified
- Any further information to support the appeal

The Institute shall review the original response received by employee/learner. If the matter has been fully addressed and there is no further information the appeal will be closed. If the initial response did not deal with all areas of the additional information presented, the appeal will be reviewed.

A written response from the Programme Manager/Director of Institute will be received within 10 working days of the acknowledgment of the complaint. The Programme Manager/Director of Institute's decision is final.