DOMAIN GROUP

DOMAIN ACADEMY
ENGLISH DOMAIN
ACADEMIC REGULATIONS
v19022019a

This manual provides the student at Domain Group with a simple set of guidelines for the preparation and the presentation of work, as well as other matters related to school regulations and other important matters.

CONTENTS

INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE

Domain Group considers quality assurance to be a core component of its business model. From a quality perspective, Domain Group Directors take responsibility for the overall delivery of quality service to our stakeholders: students, staff, faculty and employers. Specific assurance procedures are implemented during the life cycle of our programmes to ensure the delivery of a superior and consistent product. These can be summarised under the seven areas identified in the European Standards and Guidelines for Internal Quality Assurance within Higher Education Institutions (abbreviated as ESG).

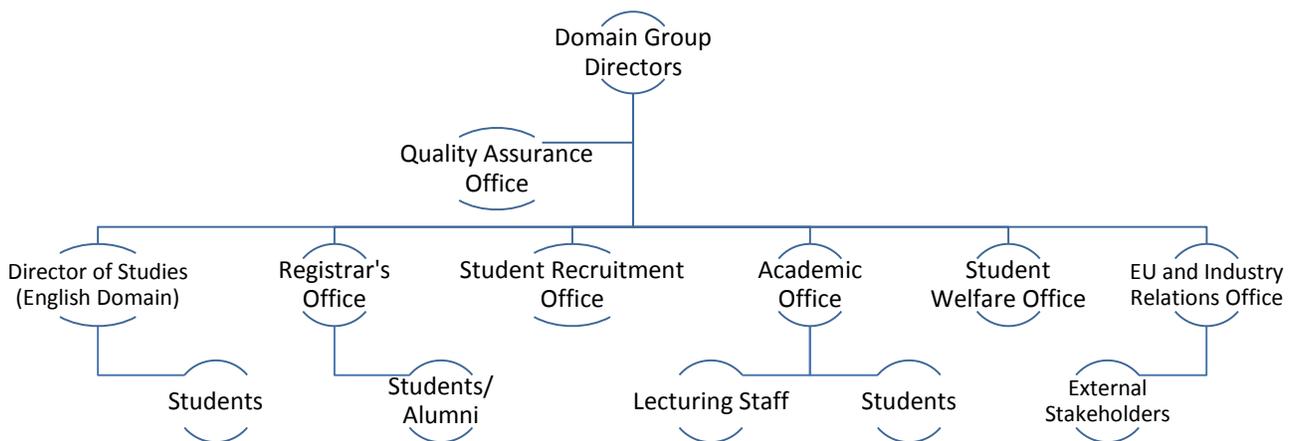## The Organisation of the Quality Assurance System

Figure 1.0   Domain Group's Quality Assurance Organisational Chart

Organisational Roles

Quality Assurance Office

- Development of Curriculum related to the course
- Synchronizing Academic and Technical Research with the industry demands
- Developing & verifying assignments and course material
- Verifying corrected assignments
- Addressing queries regarding Course Material & Assignments

Academic Director and Academic Office – Domain Academy

- Managing and administrating all formal academic matters
- Ensuring the smooth running of the school
- Managing and monitoring of the implementation of the resource allocation process within the School
- Engaging the staff of the School in devising and establishing the School's plan
- Creating a supportive working environment for all staff in the School and fostering their career development
- Attending to formal academic issues, academic progress of students and lecturers, and resolving academic issues and complaints
- Recruitment of staff/lecturers

Director of Studies (DOS) – English Domain

- Managing and administrating all formal academic matters
- Satisfying at all times the academic criteria and standards of education, license conditions and Council rules as established by the Council from time to time
- Identifying the English language training needs of the students, designing formal tuition course syllabi, selecting course materials and implementation
- Attending to formal academic issues, academic progress of students and English Language Teachers and resolving academic issues and complaints
- Recruitment of staff/lecturers

Office of the Registrar

- Ensuring that the progress of the student at Domain Group is as smooth as possible with regards to the academic needs of the students in line with the course being followed
- Responsible for the registration of students, issuing of results and formally concluding certification
- Responsible for maintaining students' academic records

Student's Recruitment Office (SRO)

- Maintaining and co-coordinating the sales/recruitment to reach company targets
- Providing students with detailed information about the Domain Group programmes
- Assisting students throughout the application process
- Running day-to-day recruitment operations
- Identifying and attending networking events suitable for the target market
- Handling, liaising and recruiting International Agents

Students Welfare Office (SWO)

- Assisting students with visas, accommodation, airport transfers, and any other welfare issues identified
- Coordinating events and logistics
- Maintaining the front office
- Answering general queries

EU & Industry Relations Office

- Supporting the implementation of the European policy agenda for growth, jobs, equity and social inclusion
- Identifying placement opportunities for the students
- Assisting students to participate in Erasmus Programmes

Trans-Institutional Collaborations

Domain Group works in collaboration with other, international academic institutions to deliver programmes for students. These collaborative relationships provide a wide range of high quality courses for students. The key institutions with which Domain Group work are:

- University of Hertfordshire
- University of Derby
- Edexcel (BTEC) – Pearson
- The Northern Consortium UK (NCUK)

Approach to Teaching and Learning

It is Domain Group's intention that every student has the opportunity to develop as an independent learner, study their subjects in depth and optimise their capacity for pragmatic, analytical and creative thought. In view of attaining educational excellence and to reflect the national priorities for research, learning and teaching, Domain Group strives to promote and support the following principles:

- A strategic approach to learning and teaching. To ensure the continued effectiveness of the strategic approach, Domain Group gathers information from students and external stakeholders. A shared understanding of this approach is promoted among the staff, students and other stakeholders.
- The resources provided give every student an equal opportunity to meet the intended learning outcomes.
- Lecturers make use of student-centred learning methods which shift the focus of instruction from the lecturer to the student and seek to encourage active student engagement.
- Ensuring that all lecturers and staff are suitably qualified.
- The Student Recruitment Office, Academic Director and Quality Assurance Office provide students with current information that specifies the learning opportunities and support available to them.
- The constructive feedback given by the lecturers and the academic staff encourages students to further their academic development.

QUALITY MANAGEMENT AND ONGOING QUALITY ASSURANCE

The process of quality management at Domain Group is governed by the core principles of **continuous improvement** and a focus on **student satisfaction**. It is the goal of Domain Group that all staff are engaged with the concepts of quality assurance and management, and understand the importance of quality assurance for staff and students.

Transparency of the Quality Assurance System

It is important that Domain Group only acts in a transparent and consistent manner, to ensure that all staff and students clearly understand the quality assurance policies and procedures. This is vital for students to know their own rights and responsibilities, as well as the responsibilities of Domain Group. In order to achieve this, Domain Group provides students with all relevant documentation they may need to understand our policies and procedures, and makes available to students any other they may request.

Another way that Domain Group achieves transparency is with the publication of all the learning outcomes and assessment criteria for all its units and courses on the website, so students are aware of what the programmes and units will require of them.

Ongoing Quality Assurance

Achieving and maintaining continuous improvement requires an integrated approach to quality assurance, where the policies and procedures are embedded and integrated with staff and their work. This means that policies must be regularly reviewed to ensure currency and accuracy, and to identify areas for improvement. Policies and procedures are reviewed regularly, and in response to any policy changes from external stakeholders that may affect Domain Group's policies and practices.

In addition, the Quality Assurance department integrate practices into other tasks to provide ongoing quality assurance. This includes reviewing and verifying student assignments, monitoring student satisfaction and areas of improvement through regular student feedback and reviewing programmes and courses.

These procedures are detailed in their respective policies and procedures:

- *Student Assessment Policy and Procedures*
- *Student Feedback Policy and Procedures*

Internal and External Auditing

Domain Group works with a variety of external stakeholders to deliver our range of programmes and services for students. These stakeholders include international educational institutions, accrediting bodies, international student recruitment agents, and local government departments, among others. As such, we are held to high quality standards both internally and externally, to ensure compliance with all relevant quality standards of external stakeholders. Internal auditing

and verification are conducted by the Quality Assurance department as may be required, in addition to frequent and regular external audits.

Domain Group does not rely solely on internal verification but has external verifiers through external audits. External audits are conducted by staff from key stakeholders; primarily, international education institutions who deliver their programmes and courses through Domain Group, or accrediting organisations such as the National Commission for Further and Higher Education. The process for these external audits varies, depending on the auditing body. External audits occur throughout the year by different stakeholders, and ensure that high levels of quality are consistently maintained.

The verifier reviews a range of documentation and student work to ensure that Domain Group is delivering the programmes as dictated by the awarding body. This process also provides regular review of the Quality Assurance department, to maintain a high level of professionalism.

The role of the external verifier is to evaluate the assessments being issued to students to make sure that these align with the learning outcomes of the programme, are of the appropriate level and are fair to the students. The external verifier will also sample assessment corrections and feedback, to make sure that the grades given by the lecturers are fair and consistent, especially in cases where more than one lecturer is teaching on the same unit.

At the end of the visit the external verifier presents a report on his findings to the Domain Group's Board of Directors, with any actions required to be taken before the next visit.

It has also been determined that, to be effective, the external verifier should be changed regularly, and the decision was taken that the external verifier is changed every 4 years.

Document Control and Management

In order to ensure document control, Domain Group has strict document management procedures.

1. To ensure version control, documents must be named and saved using standard version numbers in the following format: DOCUMENT NAME vDDMMYYYYa/b/c/etc. The last letter in the document name is used to track versions where multiple changes may be made within a single day. For example 'DG_QA Manual v04122018a'
2. Staff may not make changes to documents, except where approved by senior management. All changes must be approved by relevant managers and the Directors of Domain Group.
3. PDF documents are shared and used by staff, but final, editable versions (for example, Microsoft Word or Excel versions) are retained by the Directors of Domain Group. Where updates or changes need to occur, they must be made on the version from the Director, and the final editable version sent back to the Director for retention.

APPROVAL, MONITORING AND PERIODIC REVIEW OF PROGRAMMES AND AWARDS

Domain Group understands the importance of providing accurate, relevant and engaging courses for students to complete. As part of this, the Academic Director and Quality Assurance department are responsible for regularly reviewing the range of programmes offered through the school, as well as the units and quality of teaching within a given programme.

This process involves regularly reviewing and monitoring the programmes we offer and the programmes available for offer through the institutions with which Domain Group collaborates. Where changes are made to those programmes, or new programmes are added that may fill a gap in our service offering, we may consider adding new programmes to our course list for students. In addition, where there is an identified gap that another institution does not meet, we may develop a home-grown programme. The full policy and process on the development and review of programmes can be found in the *Programme Design and Review Policy.*

Quality Assurance for Courses and Assessment

Domain Group is committed to equity and fairness, in the consistent delivery of our programmes and their assessments. The Quality Assurance Manager and lecturers are responsible for the assessment of students following the relevant curriculum, as prescribed by the awarding institution. This is managed through the verification of all assessments and through regular student feedback.

All assessments are formulated to reflect the syllabus and to examine the extent to which the students have reached the learning outcomes. The Quality Assurance department is responsible for ensuring that assessment methods genuinely assess the learning outcomes which the programme aims for students to achieve. An appropriate amount of time for assessment and verification activities is allocated prior to the issuing of the assessment, during which the Quality Assurance department and the lecturer of the unit in question finalise the criteria on which the students are to be assessed. The Quality Assurance department also ensures that assessment is consistent between different assessors (especially when the same unit is being delivered to different groups of students) in order to achieve an outcome that is representative of a student's learning achievements. Internal verification substantiates the final grading decisions, all in line with the awarding body requirements.

Clear and transparent feedback in grading is deemed to be essential. Feedback is documented by the lecturer for each assignment, displaying where marks were awarded in a comprehensive and comprehensible manner. This enables students to review their work in a constructive manner and improve their performance in future work.

The full policy and process on student assessment and internal verification can be found in the *Student Assessment Policy and Procedures.*

REGISTER OF POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE

Domain Group has a series of policies and procedures in place to provide a transparent and consistent environment for students and staff to work and study within. These policies and procedures provide the framework for staff and students to maximise quality assurance.

Below is the register of the policies and procedures in place for Domain Group. This is updated according to any changes in existing policies or new policies that may be introduced.

The policy and procedure codes have been developed to easily refer to each document. They are categorised by General Policies (GP), Student Policies (SP) and Employee Policies (EP).

General Policies and Procedures

These policies apply to all staff, including faculty, students, contractors and visitors.

Bullying and Harassment Policy (GP_BH_1): This policy provides an overview of Domain Group's zero tolerance for bullying and harassment, definitions and examples of bullying and harassment, and the measures in place in response to instances of bullying or harassment. It is intended to provide all members of the Domain Group community with a thorough understanding of their rights and obligations.

Data Protection Policy (GP_DP_1): This policy outlines Domain Group's commitment to data protection and privacy of all staff, students, contractors or any third party. As a data controller, Domain Group is required to adhere to the regulations and legislation around data processing, within Malta and the EU. This policy provides guidelines for all staff to follow, to ensure all personal and sensitive information is treated in a confidential manner.

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy (GP_EDI_1): This document lays out Domain Group's policy position regarding the fair and equitable treatment of students and employees. Discrimination and victimisation is unacceptable and it is in the best interests of Domain Group and its employees to recognise the skills and experiences of the entire available student population and workforce.

Health and Safety Policy and Procedures (GP_HS_1): Domain Group recognises and accepts its health and safety duties for providing a safe and healthy working environment for all staff, students and other visitors to its premises. This policy ensures that all members of the Domain Group community fully understand Domain Group's commitment to providing a safe and healthy environment, as well as understanding the individual responsibilities.

Information Technology Resources Policy (GP_ITR_1): The purpose of this document is to provide an overview of the information technology (IT) resources within Domain Group, and how these are used and managed. This also provides the policy outlining Domain Group's guidelines for using the organisation's IT resources, including internet services, network and equipment. It covers appropriate and inappropriate use of IT resources, including acceptable use of social

media. This ensures that all staff work to avoid inappropriate or illegal use that creates legal or reputational risks for Domain Group.

Student and Academic Policies and Procedures

Academic Integrity Policy (SP_AI_1): The policy highlights Domain Group's commitment to academic integrity, including outlining instances where academic integrity may be called into question or violated, and the consequences for such violations. This ensures that students fully appreciate the importance of academic integrity, as well as understanding the transparent process for academic misconduct.

Domain Academy Programme Design and Review Policy (SP_PDR_1): This policy provides a clear outline of the internal processes for managing the programmes offered by Domain Academy. This includes the design and approval of new programmes, modifications to existing programmes, closure of discontinued programmes, and the regular review of existing programmes.

Domain Academy Research Ethical Approval Form (SP_REForm_1): This form must be completed by students who intend to conduct research, and submitted for review by the Domain Academy Ethics Committee. The Domain Academy Ethics Committee ensures that all research/studies are carried out according to the academy's policies, regulations and procedures and in line with the Maltese Laws. Approval must be given prior to the commencement of any field of study.

Domain Academy Student Admission Procedure (SP_SAd_1): This provides a simple and transparent outline of the admissions process for student applications, including the structure and aims of the admissions board, and student verification. Applications to study programmes with Domain Group come from a variety of sources, including through direct recruitment, events, social media, advertisements and word of mouth. Once an expression of interest has been made, there is a consistent process that is followed by all of the teams that assist with student admissions.

Domain Academy Student Assessment Policy and Procedures (SP_SAs_1): This outlines the policy and procedures for the ongoing quality assurance of student assessment within Domain Academy, and the procedures for student submission of assessment. This ensures that all students are treated fairly regarding assessment, and that students have a full and complete understanding of the process for submitting course work, including the requirements for submissions, requesting extensions, late submissions, and the issuing of results.

Recognition of Prior Learning Policy (SP_RPL_1): The purpose of this policy is to set out Domain Academy's position and approach to the recognition of prior learning (RPL) for student admissions. This policy applies to all Domain Academy student admissions, to uphold fair and equitable education for students who may face challenges in meeting entry requirements based purely on accredited qualifications.

Student Complaints Policy and Procedures (SP_SC_1): The purpose of this policy is to provide a clear and orderly process through which all students may process their complaints or grievances. This policy covers both academic and non-academic issues. In order to ensure transparency Domain Group have an Appeals Board which handles appeals by students.

Student Disciplinary Policy (SP_SD_1): The Student Disciplinary Policy is intended to ensure a speedy and efficient resolution of issues that may arise regarding student conduct. The aim is to prevent unnecessary delay whilst ensuring a full, fair and transparent assessment of the particular circumstances of an individual case. This policy covers cases of student misconduct, drug and alcohol misuse, and absenteeism.

Student Feedback Policy and Procedures (SP_SF_1): The purpose of this policy is to highlight the importance of student feedback to Domain Group, and outline the procedure for gaining student feedback, as well as how this feedback is handled. Students are given the opportunity to give feedback not just about the units taught and the relevant lecturers, but also about the premises and facilities of Domain Group, and the procedures in place. This feedback is integral in the continuous improvement of the quality of programmes delivered by Domain Group, and the services and facilities available to students.

Student Manual (SP_SM_1): The student's manual provides the students with simple and clear guidelines for the preparation and the presentation of their work. Other than valuable information about the school in general, it also presents the students with assessment regulations, grading criteria, code of conduct as well as insight on the standards that are expected and how to achieve such standards.

Employee Policies and Procedures

Employee Code of Ethics (EP_CoE_1): This sets out the key responsibilities of good conduct and practice for employees within Domain Academy. The code is intended to help employees to follow a high level of professionalism in executing their tasks. It assists staff members to adopt a clear approach in carrying out their job and reflect on the appropriate practices as professionals.

Employee Complaints Policy and Procedures (EP_EC_1): This policy provides a clear and orderly process through which all employees of the Domain Group may process their complaints or grievances. This ensures that staff understand their own obligations as well as the obligations of Domain Group in responding to and acting on complaints or grievances.

Employee Recruitment Policy and Procedures (EP_Rec_1): This policy and procedure has been developed to clearly outline the recruitment process for all staff, in line with the existing quality assurance framework, and other policies and procedures. This is an integral component in the success of the delivery of high quality teaching and support for students, in recruiting and retaining the most suitable and qualified candidates for each position.

Conflicts of Interest Policy (EP_CoI_1): Domain Group has developed this policy to ensure that all activities undertaken by the institution, its staff and its students are held to the highest

standards of integrity, equity, ethics and accountability. This policy provides an overview of what may be regarded as conflict of interest and guidelines for staff on handling such conflicts.

English Domain Faculty Human Resources Policy (EP_EDHR_1): This policy has been developed for the English Domain faculty, to ensure that all teachers understand the standards for teaching and the responsibilities of faculty, staff, and English Domain.

English Domain Teachers Manual (EP_EDTM_1): This handbook supplements the English Domain Human Resources Policy, to provide all relevant information for teaching staff about their rights and responsibilities. It also describes English Domain's teaching and learning models and values, as well as the forms and documents required by English Domain teachers.

Faculty Staff Code of Practice (EP_FCoE_1): Domain Group Code of Practice sets out the principles and behaviours expected of all members of Domain Group faculty. The overall aim of the Code of Practice is to promote and ensure high standards of practice of faculty within Domain Group.

Malpractice and Maladministration Policy and Procedures (EP_MM_1): This policy has been developed for all staff, to clearly outline their obligations and responsibilities in ensuring that all qualifications awarded by the school are fair, valid and reliable. This includes programmes developed internally, as well as those delivered on behalf of partner institutions. This guarantees the continued integrity of Domain Group, its partner organisations, and the programmes available for study.

Whistleblowing Policy (EP_WB_1): The purpose of this policy is to outline the rights and responsibilities of all Domain Group employees with regarding to whistleblowing procedures and local legislation in Malta. It has been developed in line with the Malta Whistleblower Act – Chapter 527 – September 2013.