

# QUALITY MANAGEMENT POLICY



**POLICY # EAAS/2024/240255**

**Adopted by the Senate on July 15, 2024**

## **European Academy of Advanced Studies (EAAS)**

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**Document Control**

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|------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
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| <b>Classification</b>        | Public — Published on institutional website                                                           |
| <b>Applicable To</b>         | All governance bodies, academic and administrative staff, students, and external stakeholders of EAAS |

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# 1. Introduction

The European Academy of Advanced Studies (EAAS) is a fully online Higher Education Institution (HEI) based in Malta, approved by the Malta Further and Higher Education Authority (MFHEA). EAAS is committed to providing quality education that equips students with the knowledge, skills, and innovative mindset required for a successful future, delivered through modern pedagogical methods, flexible online learning, and industry-aligned academic programmes.

As part of its institutional accreditation and its ongoing commitment to academic and administrative excellence, EAAS has developed and formally adopted this Quality Management Policy ("the Policy"). The Policy describes the architecture of the institution's Internal Quality Management System (IQMS), including the governance structures, processes, tools, reporting mechanisms, data collection procedures, timelines, and the operational quality cycle that underpin quality management at EAAS.

This Policy is a public document, published on the institutional website, and demonstrates EAAS's commitment to transparency, continuous improvement, and accountability in education, in line with the Malta National Quality Assurance Framework (NQAF), the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG), and the requirements of the Education Act (Cap. 327).

# 2. Purpose and Scope

## 2.1 Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to guarantee and continuously improve all academic and administrative activities of EAAS in accordance with its mission, vision, and core values. Specifically, this Policy:

- Establishes a structured and comprehensive framework for quality management covering all operational areas of the institution;
- Provides a reference point for staff, students, and other stakeholders regarding institutional quality expectations and responsibilities;
- Assures the public and regulatory bodies that EAAS is committed to maintaining high standards of education and services;
- Ensures compliance with the Malta NQAF and the standards of the MFHEA; and
- Facilitates the creation of a shared culture of quality that engages all levels of the institution.

## 2.2 Scope

This Policy applies to all governance bodies, faculties, academic and administrative units, staff, students, and external stakeholders of EAAS. It covers all eleven MFHEA Institutional Standards against which EAAS is assessed and applies equally to current and

future academic programmes delivered by the institution, including the Bachelor of Arts in Tourism and Hospitality Management and any subsequent programmes.

| Std. | MFHEA Institutional Standard                                            |
|------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1    | Mission and strategic management                                        |
| 2    | Governance, organisational structure, and administration                |
| 3    | Quality management                                                      |
| 4    | Integrity, accountability, and information management                   |
| 5    | Teaching and administrative staff                                       |
| 6    | Design, monitoring, and review of programmes                            |
| 7    | Student-centred learning, teaching, and assessment                      |
| 8    | Student administration and student support services                     |
| 9    | Learning resources and facilities                                       |
| 10   | Research, development, and/or other creative activity                   |
| 11   | Institutional cooperation, service to society, and internationalisation |

### 3. Policy Statement and Guiding Principles

EAAS has formally accepted this Quality Management Policy as the guiding institutional instrument for upholding standards in all academic and non-academic functions. All levels of the institution including subdivisions, faculties, departments, and administrative units are involved in quality management, and designated authorities such as the Rector, Deans, and other academic leaders bear responsibility for actively monitoring quality at the institutional scope. Students participate actively in quality management by providing feedback on courses, services, and the learning experience, ensuring a student-centred approach to quality.

The Policy is underpinned by the following principles:

- **Commitment to Continuous Improvement:** EAAS fosters an atmosphere of constant enhancement across all academic and administrative procedures to guarantee educational relevance, value, and international competitiveness.
- **Evidence-Based Decision-Making:** Institutional decisions relating to quality are grounded in reliable data, performance indicators, and documented evidence rather than assumption.
- **Regular Review and Evaluation:** All academic and administrative activities are subject to regular, structured review and evaluation.

- **Collaboration with Regulatory and Partner Bodies:** EAAS works closely with MFHEA and other relevant bodies, particularly in relation to programme accreditation.
- **Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS):** EAAS operates an IQMS aligned with the Malta NQAF and international standards of excellence, guided by stakeholder involvement, high-quality instruction, strategic quality management, and ongoing evaluation.
- **Transparency and Public Accountability:** Organisational records and quality outcomes relevant to accreditation and public assurance are readily available, accurate, and accessible.
- **Operational Approach:** The institution follows an input–process–output model aligned with the OPDCA cycle (Observe–Plan–Do–Check–Act), achieved through the recruitment of qualified personnel, provision of supportive working environments and academic autonomy, clearly defined governance and accountability frameworks, and structured monitoring of adherence to the strategic plan.

In summary, quality management at EAAS is centred on a clearly defined mission and vision, advanced through strategic planning and coordinated action, and sustained through continuous review and enhancement grounded in reliable data and stakeholder feedback.

## 4. Legal and Regulatory Framework

This Policy operates within, and gives effect to, the following legal and regulatory framework:

- The Education Act, Cap. 327 of the Laws of Malta (in particular Part 85–112), governing the establishment and operation of further and higher education institutions in Malta;
- The regulatory requirements and licensing conditions of the Malta Further and Higher Education Authority (MFHEA);
- Malta's National Quality Assurance Framework (NQAF) for further and higher education;
- The Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG), reflecting EAAS's alignment with the European Higher Education Area (EHEA);
- The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and applicable Maltese data protection legislation, insofar as quality management activities involve the collection and processing of personal data.

Where any conflict arises between this Policy and applicable law or MFHEA regulatory requirements, the applicable law and MFHEA requirements shall prevail, and the Policy shall be amended accordingly through the review procedure set out in Section 13.

## 5. Governance and Responsibilities for Quality Management

Responsibility for quality management is clearly defined across organisational units and leadership positions to ensure accountability and effective implementation. EAAS has established the appropriate organisational structures to oversee and control its quality management system, comprising a dedicated quality management unit responsible for the daily coordination of quality assurance processes, and sufficient administrative personnel allocated to data collection, processing, and dissemination. Key governance roles and their core quality management responsibilities are set out below.

| Governance Body / Role                       | Core Quality Management Responsibility                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|----------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| EAAS Management Board                        | Provides ultimate strategic oversight of the Quality Management System (QMS); approves the Quality Management Policy and associated resourcing; ensures compliance with MFHEA standards and the National Quality Assurance Framework (NQAF). |
| Rector (Head of Institution)                 | Holds overall executive accountability for the implementation of the Policy; ensures quality management is embedded within institutional strategy; reports on quality performance to the Management Board.                                   |
| Vice Rector – Academic Affairs               | Supports the Rector in the operational coordination of academic quality matters and in the implementation of institutional decisions arising from quality review.                                                                            |
| Senate / Academic Council                    | Oversees academic governance, curriculum standards, assessment integrity, and student learning outcomes; approves programme-level quality findings and improvement actions.                                                                  |
| Quality Assurance and Compliance Unit (QACU) | Owns and administers the Policy day-to-day; coordinates the OPDCA quality cycle; conducts internal audits, surveys, and programme reviews; monitors regulatory compliance; maintains quality records and reporting.                          |
| Deans / Programme Coordinators and Faculty   | Responsible for teaching quality, assessment integrity, curriculum currency, and continuous improvement within their respective programmes and faculties.                                                                                    |
| Administration and Student Support Services  | Monitors student satisfaction, gathers service-related feedback, and enhances the online learning and administrative experience.                                                                                                             |
| Ethics Committee                             | Reviews adherence to the Code of Ethics and academic integrity standards as part of the wider quality framework.                                                                                                                             |

| Governance Body / Role                                            | Core Quality Management Responsibility                                                                                                          |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Students and External Stakeholders (industry partners, employers) | Participate in quality assurance through feedback mechanisms, advisory panels, programme evaluation, and collaboration on curriculum relevance. |

This structure ensures a comprehensive quality assurance approach that integrates academic staff, administrative personnel, students, and external stakeholders within a single institutional quality management framework, consistent with the institution's organisational chart (organigram).

## 6. The Internal Quality Management System (IQMS)

EAAS has formally adopted an Internal Quality Management System (IQMS), aligned with the MFHEA National Quality Assurance Framework, as the operational mechanism through which this Policy is implemented. The IQMS is closely integrated with the institution's strategic planning processes and captures all activities of the institution, whether academic or administrative in nature — including student support services, institutional management, and governance.

Students, faculty, and administrative staff actively participate in quality assurance activities through structured feedback systems, internal audits, surveys, and programme reviews. The Quality Assurance and Compliance Unit (QACU) coordinates the implementation, monitoring, and continuous improvement of all quality-related activities, and reports on IQMS performance to institutional leadership on a regular basis.

The integration of strategic planning with quality management facilitates the assessment, evaluation, auditing, and continuous improvement of institutional quality in relation to the institution's mission and vision, ensuring that all systems and components function in harmony towards EAAS's strategic goals.

## 7. The OPDCA Quality Cycle

Quality management at EAAS is operationalised through the OPDCA cycle (Observe–Plan–Do–Check–Act), a continuous improvement model applied consistently across all institutional functions, including teaching and instructional delivery, learning processes, research, partnerships, and institutional management.

| Stage          | Description                                                                                                                               | Illustrative Activities                                                                                                                                     |
|----------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Observe</b> | Systematic gathering of information on institutional performance, the external environment, and stakeholder needs before planning begins. | Environmental and labour-market scanning; review of prior audit findings; collation of student, staff, and employer feedback; benchmarking data collection. |

| Stage        | Description                                                                                                                    | Illustrative Activities                                                                                                                                |
|--------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Plan</b>  | Development of strategic and operational frameworks, quality objectives, performance indicators, and institutional benchmarks. | Setting annual quality objectives; defining KPIs per Standard; scheduling the internal audit and survey calendar; curriculum and staffing plans.       |
| <b>Do</b>    | Implementation of academic and administrative activities in line with established plans and quality standards.                 | Delivery of teaching and assessment; provision of student support services; execution of governance and administrative processes; resource allocation. |
| <b>Check</b> | Evaluation of whether objectives are being achieved through structured monitoring and evidence collection.                     | Internal audits; student and staff surveys; peer observation of teaching; programme and module evaluation; compliance reviews.                         |
| <b>Act</b>   | Evidence-based decision-making to adjust policies, curricula, and practices based on Check-stage findings.                     | Corrective and preventive action plans; policy revision; staff development and training; curriculum enhancement; closing of audit findings.            |

This cycle operates continuously and iteratively: outcomes from the Act stage feed directly into the next Observe and Plan stages, ensuring that quality management functions as an ongoing mechanism embedded within daily institutional operations rather than a one-off regulatory exercise.

## 8. Quality Assurance Mechanisms and Tools

EAAS employs a range of mechanisms and tools to implement, monitor, and evidence its quality management processes, including:

- **Internal Audits:** Periodic, structured audits of academic and administrative processes conducted by or under the coordination of the QACU.
- **Programme and Module Reviews:** Systematic review of curriculum design, delivery, and outcomes, including the use of the CIPP evaluation model (Context, Input, Process, Product) for programme evaluation.
- **Student and Staff Surveys:** Structured feedback instruments covering teaching quality, student services, the virtual learning environment (VLE), and overall satisfaction.
- **Peer Observation of Teaching:** Structured observation and feedback processes to support teaching quality and staff development.

- **Benchmarking:** Regular comparison of institutional performance against comparable online higher education institutions and international accreditation standards and best practices.
- **Digital Monitoring Tools:** Use of the Learning Management System (LMS)/Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) and other digital platforms to generate data on student engagement, progress, and outcomes, analysed with full respect for data protection regulations.
- **Annual Self-Assessment:** An annual internal self-assessment providing a comprehensive overview of institutional quality performance across all MFHEA Standards.

## 9. Stakeholder Engagement

Students and external stakeholders play an active role in the quality assurance processes of EAAS. Their participation includes:

- **Curriculum Development:** Ensuring that programmes remain relevant to industry needs and labour market developments through consultation with employers and industry professionals.
- **Student Feedback Mechanisms:** Surveys, focus groups, and advisory panels that directly inform academic and administrative improvements.
- **Industry Collaboration:** Alignment of academic programmes with professional practice and employment trends through advisory panels, employer engagement, and career-focused initiatives.

This engagement ensures that EAAS maintains a responsive, stakeholder-informed quality management system that reflects the needs of learners and the labour market alike.

## 10. Performance Monitoring and Reporting

EAAS prepares regular performance reports to monitor institutional performance across academic and administrative functions, identify areas requiring improvement or policy adjustment, and support accountability through evidence-based decision-making. Reporting includes:

- Annual internal self-assessment reports covering all MFHEA Institutional Standards;
- Periodic reports from the Quality Assurance and Compliance Unit to the Rector and Management Board;
- Programme-level reports summarising survey results, audit findings, and improvement actions; and
- Benchmarking reports comparing institutional performance against comparable HEIs and international standards.

Findings from performance monitoring feed directly into the Act stage of the OPDCA cycle, ensuring that reporting results in tangible institutional improvement rather than static record-keeping.

## **11. Promotion of a Quality Culture**

Institutional leadership actively promotes a culture of quality across EAAS by encouraging shared responsibility for maintaining and improving academic and administrative standards. This is achieved through:

- Promoting a shared understanding of quality values and institutional standards among staff and students;
- Integrating quality assurance practices into everyday academic and administrative activities, rather than treating them as separate or occasional exercises;
- Supporting continuous professional development (CPD) for academic and administrative staff to strengthen teaching effectiveness and operational efficiency; and
- Recognising and reinforcing good practice identified through the quality assurance process.

## **12. Data Protection and Information Management**

EAAS is committed to handling all data generated through quality management activities including survey responses, audit records, and digital engagement data drawn from the LMS and other online platforms in a manner that is safe, lawful, and compliant with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and applicable Maltese data protection legislation. Access to quality-related data is restricted to authorised personnel, and periodic evaluations are conducted to ensure ongoing compliance with GDPR and institutional data governance requirements.

## **13. Transparency, Publication, and Policy Review**

### **13.1 Transparency and Public Accessibility**

In keeping with its commitment to transparency and accountability, EAAS publishes this Quality Management Policy on its institutional website, ensuring that it is accessible to staff, students, applicants, employers, and the public.

### **13.2 Periodic Review**

This Policy and its associated procedures are subject to periodic review, at minimum on an annual basis, or sooner where required by regulatory change, audit findings, or institutional restructuring. Reviews are coordinated by the Quality Assurance and Compliance Unit and are designed to ensure that the Policy:

- Remains aligned with MFHEA standards and international higher education frameworks;
- Reflects performance data, stakeholder feedback, and evolving regulatory requirements; and
- Continues to support institutional growth, innovation, and student success.

Any substantive amendments to this Policy require approval by the EAAS Management Board prior to publication.

### 13.3 Review History

| Version | Date         | Summary of Change                                                                                               | Approved By           |
|---------|--------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1.0     | 20 July 2026 | Initial issue of the Quality Management Policy, developed in support of institutional accreditation with MFHEA. | EAAS Management Board |

## 14. Related Policies and Documents

This Policy should be read in conjunction with the following institutional documents, which together form the wider EAAS quality assurance framework:

- Internal Quality Assurance Manual (Appendix 3.1);
- Code of Ethics and Academic Integrity Policy;
- Programme Design, Monitoring, and Review Procedures;
- Student Feedback and Survey Procedures;
- Data Protection and Information Governance Policy;
- Self-Assessment Report (SAR) submitted to the Malta Further and Higher Education Authority.

## 15. Approval

This Quality Management Policy has been approved by the EAAS Management Board and is issued under the authority of the Rector of the European Academy of Advanced Studies.

### Approved on behalf of EAAS Management Board

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Position: Rector, EAAS

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_