

EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE AUDIT REPORT

INITIAL PROVIDER ACCREDITATION: HIGHER EDUCATION

Global Management Business School
(GMBS)

Carried out between
5 & 6 March 2026

Quality education for
confident futures .

Contents

Contents.....	3
Abbreviations List.....	4
Executive Summary.....	5
Overview of the External Quality Assurance Process for the granting of Institutional Accreditation.....	5
Summary of the Conclusions Reached by the Peer Review Panel.....	5
About the External Quality Audit	6
Standards for Accreditation.....	7
The Peer Review Panel.....	9
Specific Terms of Reference	10
Institutional Context and Mission Statement	11
Analysis and Findings of Panel	12
Standard 1: Mission and strategic management	12
Standard 2: Governance, organisational structure and administration.....	15
Standard 3: Quality management.....	18
Standard 4: Integrity, accountability and information management.....	21
Standard 5: Teaching and administrative staff	24
Standard 6: Design, monitoring and review of programmes.....	28
Standard 7: Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment.....	34
Standard 8: Student administration and student support services	39
Standard 9: Learning resources and facilities	44
Standard 10: Research, development and/or other creative activity	48
Standard 11: Institutional cooperation, service to society and internationalisation	49
Panel Member Signatures	52
Annexes	53
Annex 1: Agenda and Accreditation Visit Agenda.....	53
Annex 2: Review Panel Bio Notes	55

Abbreviations List

ECTS	European Credit Transfer System
EQA/QA audit	External Quality Assurance Audit
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
IQA	Internal Quality Assurance
LMS	Learning Management System
MFHEA	Malta Further and Higher Education Authority
MQF	Malta Qualifications Framework
NCFHE	National Commission for Further and Higher Education
NQAF	National Quality Assurance Framework for Further and Higher Education
SAR	Self-Assessment Report
VLE	Virtual Learning Environment

Executive Summary

Overview of the External Quality Assurance Process for the granting of Institutional Accreditation.

This report is a result of the External Quality Assurance process undertaken by an independent peer review panel upon application to obtain initial accreditation. The panel evaluated the documentation submitted by the educational institution and conducted an onsite audit visit. The panel is responsible for reaching conclusions on all applicable Standards in line with the Minimal Indicators, which are evaluated to grant initial accreditation, as outlined in the External Quality Assurance Provider Accreditation Manual for Higher Education Institutions. Through this report, the panel also highlighted areas of good practice which, in its view, make a positive contribution to academic standards and quality of education that are worthy of being emulated and disseminated more widely.

Timeline

<i>EQA Audit Timeline – Global Management Business School (GMBS)</i>	
<i>Induction meeting</i>	<i>11 December 2026</i>
<i>Pre-accreditation provider meeting</i>	<i>12 February 2026</i>
<i>Desk-based analysis</i>	<i>05 February 2026</i>
<i>Audit visit</i>	<i>5-6 March 2026</i>

Summary of the Conclusions Reached by the Peer Review Panel

The panel considered ten Standards, as Standard 10 is not applicable here. Of these, Standards 3, 5, 9 were considered fully compliant; 1, 2, 4, 7, 8 substantially compliant; 6 and 11 partially Compliant

About the External Quality Audit

About the External Quality Audit

The scope of external quality assurance in Malta is firstly to evaluate the education providers against the indicators included in the External Quality Assurance Provider Accreditation Manual for Higher Education Institutions (<https://mfhea.mt/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/EQA-Accreditation-Manual.pdf>) (hereafter referred to as “the Manual”), through the analysis of the self-assessment documentation, the IQA document, and the QA Manual as well as through the information recorded by the peer review panels during the accreditation visits.

Based on this scope, the external quality assurance processes conducted based on the Manual aim to:

- certify the compliance of the providers with the indicators included in the Manual;
- consolidate the internal quality assurance systems at institutional level;
- support the providers in the quality enhancement and continuous development of their operations;
- increase the quality of learning outcomes across the Maltese higher education sector;
- enhance the student learning experience.

Standards for Accreditation

Standard 1: Mission and strategic management

Standard 2: Governance, organisational structure and administration

Standard 3: Quality management

Standard 4: Integrity, accountability and information management

Standard 5: Teaching and administrative staff

Standard 6: Design, monitoring and review of programmes

Standard 7: Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment

Standard 8: Student administration and student support services

Standard 9: Learning resources and facilities

Standard 10: Research, development and/or other creative activity

Standard 11: Institutional cooperation, service to society and internationalisation

The Standards and indicators as per the Manual have been drafted in alignment with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG).

The **MINIMAL INDICATORS** included in the Manual reflect the mandatory level of achievement that providers have to demonstrate compliance with for accreditation purposes and therefore must be met both before the commencement of their operations (at licensing stage) as well as throughout their activities (during every audit process).

The **PERFORMANCE INDICATORS** included in this Manual reflect the mandatory level of achievement that providers have to demonstrate compliance with during the audit process in order to have their accreditation confirmed. Therefore, performance indicators must be met, starting with the first audit that a provider undergoes five years after the commencement of its operations as well as throughout their entire licensing period, thus are not included in this report.

Where applicable, additional indicators have been developed in the context of online provision.

The peer review panels are nominated by the MFHEA. The panel shall have a minimum of three members: a Chair, between one and five experts, and at least one student. The panel has the duty to gather, verify and exchange information and supporting elements so as to be able to check the statements made in the self-assessment documentation, Internal Quality Assurance Document, and Quality Assurance Manual as well as during the accreditation visits, and to formulate their own assessments on the performance of the provider against the Standards included in the Manual. For providers proposing to offer fully online and/or blended learning, the panel will have an additional peer reviewer specialising in online evaluation.

The peer review panels shall discuss and exchange the collected evidence, verify the comprehensiveness and interpretation of the data, and analyse various sources in order to come to a consensual, coherent and consistent conclusion through triangulation and cross-referencing. All peer review panel members are required to sign a Declaration of Interest Form prior to starting work on the external quality assurance process.

The approach of the QA audit is not simply about checking whether providers adhere to the regulations; it examines how providers are developing their own systems in addressing the expectations of sound management of educational standards and the quality of their learning and teaching provision. It does not involve the routine identification and confirmation of criteria – a 'tick-box' approach – but rather a mature and reflective dialogue with providers about the ways in which they discharge their obligations for quality and the identification of existing good practices.

Peer review panels will consider the indicators included in the Manual when determining the judgement for each Standard. The judgements for each Standard will be expressed as follows:

- **Compliant** - The institution is entirely in alignment with the Standard, which is implemented in an effective manner.
- **Substantially Compliant** - The institution is to a large extent in alignment with the Standard, the general principles of which are followed in practice.

- **Partially Compliant** - Some parts of the Standard are met while others are not; the implementation of the Standard is not effective enough.
- **Non-compliant** - The institution fails to comply with the Standard.

The Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) considered this report and forwarded it, along with the accreditation decision, to the MFHEA Board for endorsement.

The Peer Review Panel

The peer review panel comprised:

Chair of Review Panel: Dr Maiki Udam

Peer Reviewer: Dr Robert Suban

Student Peer Reviewer: Mr Gaga Gvenetadze

Online Learning Peer Reviewer: Mr Keith Aquilina

Accreditation Coordinators (MFHEA): Ms Sibby Xuereb and Ms Bilyana Boshova

Specific Terms of Reference

In accordance with the MFHEA External Quality Assurance Accreditation Manual for Higher Education Institutions, the panel was responsible for evaluating the extent to which the institution is prepared to fulfil its responsibilities in ensuring the quality and standards of the education it intends to provide.

Given that this is an application for initial accreditation, the review focused not only on existing policies and procedures but also on the institution's readiness for implementation, including the robustness, coherence and feasibility of its planned systems.

As the provider intends to operate as a fully online institution, particular attention was also given to arrangements related to digital delivery, online pedagogy, assessment integrity, student support, and the reliability of technological infrastructure.

In particular, the following areas were addressed:

1. the fitness for purpose, coherence and anticipated effectiveness of the Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) system, including the examination of policies, procedures, and supporting documentation, as well as their readiness for implementation;
2. the extent to which the provider demonstrates compliance with the MFHEA standards and regulatory requirements applicable at licensing stage, including the completeness, transparency and accessibility of public information;
3. the governance, organisational structure and financial planning of the provider, including assurance regarding its legal status, the appropriateness of its structures, and the capacity of its leadership and staff to support the planned provision;
4. the readiness of the institution to deliver its programmes in an online environment, including the adequacy of digital infrastructure, learning resources, staff competences, and systems for ensuring student engagement and academic integrity.

These areas were identified as the main lines of inquiry guiding the panel's analysis.

Institutional Context and Mission Statement

GMBS Global Management Business School (GMBS) is a newly established higher education provider seeking initial accreditation to operate as a fully online institution. The institution intends to offer study programmes in the field of business and management, targeting an international student population and primarily focusing on adult learners and working professionals.

The institution's mission emphasises the provision of flexible, accessible, and digitally delivered higher education aligned with labour market needs. It highlights a commitment to lifelong learning, internationalisation, and the development of competences relevant to contemporary global business environments. The mission also refers to the intention to engage in research and to contribute to societal development through education and knowledge dissemination.

GMBS operates within a strategic framework consisting of a Long-Term Plan, Business Plan, and Financial Plan. These documents define the institution's strategic objectives, planned activities, resource allocation, and development timelines. The strategic priorities include the development of online study programmes, the establishment of internal quality assurance processes, the creation of partnerships, and the implementation of digital infrastructure.

The institution has established a governance and organisational structure comprising a Board of Directors, Academic Senate, Rectorate, Scientific Council, and administrative units. Responsibilities for academic, administrative, and quality assurance functions are defined within institutional statutes and internal regulations.

As an online provider, GMBS relies on digital infrastructure to support teaching, learning, assessment, and student support services. The institution has adopted a learning management system and associated digital tools intended to facilitate programme delivery, communication, and monitoring of student engagement.

The institution has developed an Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS), which outlines processes for programme design, delivery, monitoring, and review, as well as procedures for staff management and student administration. Policies and regulations covering academic integrity, data protection, and student lifecycle processes have been established.

The planned provision is designed to operate across multiple geographical contexts and, according to the institution's plans, may involve delivery in more than one language and the recruitment of an internationally diverse student body.

Analysis and Findings of Panel

Analysis and Findings of Panel

Standard 1: Mission and strategic management

***Main Findings* according to the criteria of Minimal Indicators:**

1.1 The institutional mission is concise, clear and aligned with strategic planning.

Panel's Findings:

The institution has articulated a broad and ambitious mission, emphasising online higher education provision, research, labour-market relevance, internationalisation, and social responsibility. The mission is clearly stated in the Self-Assessment Report (SAR) and embedded within the Long-Term Plan and Business Plan. It demonstrates alignment with the provider's intention to operate as a fully online higher education institution and reflects current higher education discourse on lifelong learning, employability, and digital delivery.

1.2 The institution has a strategic development plan that is measurable, time-bound and achievable.

Panel's Findings:

The Long-Term Plan and Business Plan collectively replace the strategic development plan. The goals and objectives outlined in these documents are formulated in measurable, time-bound, and achievable terms

- 1.3 There is an operational plan which describes future activities derived from the strategic plan, sets Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and timelines together with resources needed for their implementation, and defines the responsibility for implementation of the goals.

Panel's Findings:

As stated in 1.1. and 1.2, the strategic development framework consists of a Long-Term Plan, Business Plan and Financial Plan, which together function as the institution's strategic and operational planning instruments. These documents include objectives, KPIs, timelines, assigned responsibilities, and financial allocations. The panel notes that, although there is no single document explicitly titled "Operational Plan", the Business Plan effectively fulfils this function.

- 1.4. The allocation of the institutional financial resources is done through a transparent budgeting process and is aligned to the strategic and operational plans.

Panel's Findings:

Financial planning is presented as transparent and aligned with strategic priorities, and the existence of an annual budgeting process approved by the Board of Directors is documented. While this satisfies the formal requirement, the panel notes that financial sustainability assumptions have not yet been stress-tested against realistic enrolment scenarios, which is particularly relevant in the competitive online education market.

During the interviews, the panel learned that the institution plans starting the operation in three languages, meaning in three students cohorts, requiring more teachers and support staff that is not counted in the business and financial plan.

- 1.5. The institution has a plan that ensures the business continuity of all its major processes. The plan takes into account all possible risks and mechanisms for their prevention as well as strategies for risk assessment and mitigation.

Panel's Findings:

The institution has adopted a Business Continuity Plan and Risk Analysis, addressing risks related to digital infrastructure, data security, regulatory compliance, and operational disruptions. While the existence of these documents is positive, the panel observes that risk mitigation measures are largely procedural and descriptive, with limited evidence of prioritisation of critical risks or scenario-based planning.

Performance indicators 1.6 to 1.11 need to be met once the institution is licensed and operational.

Additional indicators in the context of online provision:

1.12. Strategic and operational plans mention online and blended learning.

Digital Peer's Findings:

Online learning is embedded in the institution's strategic and operational documentation and is presented as central to the provider's model. Interviews also confirmed that the institution intends to operate online-first.

Judgement: Substantially Compliant

Recommendations:

- The institution is recommended to revise its business and financial plan to ensure that the implications of delivering programmes in three languages are fully reflected, particularly in terms of staffing requirements and resource allocation for multiple student cohorts.
- The institution is recommended to strengthen its Business Continuity Plan and Risk Analysis by prioritising key risks and integrating scenario-based planning. This should ensure that mitigation measures move beyond procedural descriptions and provide clear, actionable responses to high-impact risks.

Standard 2: Governance, organisational structure and administration

Main Findings according to the criteria of Minimal Indicators:

- 2.1. The procedures and criteria for the election/appointment of leadership positions and governance bodies are clearly defined in institutional regulations and made transparent to the academic community of the institution.

Panel's Findings:

GMBS has established a formally documented governance and organisational structure, comprising a Board of Directors, Academic Senate, Rectorate, Scientific Council and Disciplinary Committee. The respective roles, responsibilities, and procedures for appointment or election are clearly defined in institutional statutes and internal regulations and are publicly accessible. (SAR)

- 2.2. The persons occupying leadership positions and those sitting on senior governance bodies are qualified and fit for the responsibilities of their roles.

Panel's Findings:

The qualifications of individuals appointed to leadership positions appear appropriate based on provided CVs and role descriptions. Nonetheless, the panel notes that several key roles are concentrated in a small number of individuals, raising questions about workload, role separation, and operational resilience.

- 2.3. Provisions are made for membership of governance bodies to include representatives of all stakeholders - students, academic and administrative staff and, where possible, representatives of the labour market.

Panel's Findings:

The panel acknowledges that governance bodies include representation from key stakeholder groups, including academic staff, administrative staff and students, and that labour market input is foreseen primarily through advisory and consultative mechanisms. On paper, this satisfies the minimal indicators. However, as the institution has not yet commenced operations, it was not possible to obtain full evidence during the interviews regarding the practical implementation and effectiveness of these arrangements. In particular, stakeholder participation, including that of students and

external representatives, could not yet be observed in practice or supported by operational examples.

- 2.4. There is a formally adopted organisational structure where governance, decision making, and distribution of responsibilities of all levels and units are clearly defined in an achievable and realistic manner.

Panel's Findings:

The institution has established a formally adopted organisational structure in which governance arrangements, decision-making processes, and the distribution of responsibilities across all levels and units are clearly defined. The framework appears coherent, realistic, and aligned with the institution's planned scope of activities.

The panel notes that the governance architecture is relatively comprehensive for a newly established, fully online provider. However, the institution has demonstrated awareness of this and has indicated measures to ensure effective coordination and adaptability. The panel considers that the structure provides a solid basis for institutional operations, while its practical functioning and proportionality can be further refined as the institution moves into implementation.

Performance indicators 2.5 to 2.9 need to be met once the institution is licensed and operational.

Additional indicators in the context of online provision:

- 2.10. A key managerial post or unit dedicated to the management of online and blended learning from an educational point of view is included in the organisational structure of the institution.

Digital Peer's Findings:

A senior role with responsibility for online learning is identified, and documentation refers to pedagogical oversight of online learning. Interviews also confirmed cooperation between academic and technical roles although some operational aspects are still to be defined. There remains some lack of clarity regarding role boundaries, accountability lines, lines of accountability, and the interface among academic leadership, technical support, and quality management.

2.11. Sufficient resources are allocated to adequately cater for the technical infrastructure, training and systems for online and blended learning.

Digital Peer's Findings:

Documentation evidences allocation of resources for infrastructure, continuity, backups and training, and interviews confirmed contractual arrangements with external technical partners and hosting safeguards. Staff training has begun. Nevertheless, some critical tools, including live delivery arrangements and proctoring solutions, were still not fully implemented at the time of the visit.

Judgement: Substantially Compliant

Recommendations:

- The provider needs to ensure that all core systems required for delivery, communication and assessment integrity are fully operational before first intake.

Standard 3: Quality management

Main Findings according to the criteria of Minimal Indicators:

- 3.1. The institution has formally adopted a quality management policy that describes the organisation of the quality management system, its processes, mechanisms, instruments, reporting, data collection, timeframes and quality cycle. The policy is a public document.

Panel's Findings:

GMBS has formally adopted an Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS), supported by a Quality Policy and Quality Manual, which collectively describe the structure, processes, reporting mechanisms and quality cycle. The documentation is comprehensive and publicly accessible, and it aligns structurally with MFHEA expectations

The system adopts a process-based approach and defines planning, monitoring, review and improvement cycles across academic and administrative activities. On paper, this satisfies the minimal indicator.

- 3.2. The responsibilities of departments, schools, faculties, institutes and/or other organisational units as well as those in leadership roles and students, with respect to quality management, are clearly defined.

Panel's Findings:

The IQAS and related statutes clearly allocate responsibilities for quality management across governance bodies, leadership roles, academic staff and students. The Quality Board is designated as a central oversight body, and student representation is formally embedded in quality-related structures.

While this distribution of responsibilities is clearly articulated, the panel observes that the governance and quality architecture appears extensive relative to the size and early developmental stage of the institution. There is a potential risk that overlapping mandates between academic, quality and managerial structures may generate complexity and dilute accountability, particularly in the first operational cycle.

- 3.3. The quality management system forms part of the institutional strategic management system and covers the whole range of activities, both academically and non-academically.

Panel's Findings:

Quality management is formally integrated into strategic and operational planning documents. The institution explicitly links quality processes to strategic objectives, KPIs and risk management mechanisms.

The system covers academic design, delivery, assessment, student services, staff development and administrative functions. This demonstrates a holistic institutional approach rather than a narrow academic focus.

- 3.4. The institution has relevant structures in place to provide oversight arrangements for quality management; sufficient staff, including at least one quality management role occupied by an internal staff member, resources and administrative support are allocated for the operational activities of quality management.

Panel's Findings:

The institution has established a Quality Board and designated leadership roles responsible for quality assurance. Documentation indicates allocation of staff and administrative support to quality-related activities.

The panel acknowledges the formal existence of oversight structures and internal responsibility for QA. However, given the predominantly online delivery model and the ambition of the institutional architecture, the sustainability and proportionality of QA staffing arrangements should be carefully monitored. Concentration of multiple responsibilities within a limited number of individuals may create operational vulnerability and workload pressure once student numbers increase.

- 3.5. The institution regulates procedures for the quality management of any elements of an entity's activities that are subcontracted to or carried out by other parties; in the case of local representatives or franchises of foreign providers, explicit reference is made to the quality management procedures of the parent provider and the role of the local representative or franchise.

Panel's Findings:

N/A

Performance indicators 3.6 to 3.12 need to be met once the institution is licensed and operational.

Additional indicators in the context of online provision:

3.13. The quality management policy includes arrangements specific to online and blended learning.

Digital Peer's Findings:

The Internal Quality Assurance System governs online programme design, delivery, monitoring and review, embedding online provision within QA processes.

The IQA system explicitly includes online programme design, delivery, monitoring and review, and online provision is embedded in institutional QA processes. However, interviews suggested that online QA may still rely heavily on the same tools used for face-to-face provision, and the formal use of analytics and digital performance indicators in decision-making is not yet sufficiently explicit.

Judgement: Compliant

Recommendations:

- N/A

Standard 4: Integrity, accountability and information management

Main Findings according to the criteria of Minimal Indicators:

- 4.1. The institution has a Code of Ethics through which it defends the values of academic freedom and ethical integrity; the Code is fit for purpose and is made publicly available on the institutional website.

Panel's Findings:

The institution has adopted a comprehensive Code of Ethics covering academic freedom, ethical conduct, non-discrimination, and professional integrity. The Code is publicly available and aligned with MFHEA expectations.

The panel considers the policy framework itself to be adequate.

- 4.2. The Code of Ethics requires that all internal stakeholders act consistently with high standards of ethical conduct and academic integrity in research, teaching and performance evaluation, and in the conduct of administrative duties, and to avoid conflicts of interest; the Code promotes a culture against intolerance, discrimination and harassment of any kind amongst students and staff.

Panel's Findings:

The Code of Ethics establishes clear expectations regarding ethical conduct and academic integrity across all areas of institutional activity, including research, teaching, performance evaluation, and administrative duties. The Code explicitly addresses the avoidance of conflicts of interest and promotes a culture of professionalism and responsibility among all internal stakeholders.

The panel notes that the Code also places strong emphasis on fostering an inclusive and respectful institutional environment, explicitly rejecting intolerance, discrimination, and harassment. The provisions are clearly articulated and aligned with good practice and regulatory expectations.

Overall, the panel considers that the Code of Ethics provides an adequate and appropriate framework to guide ethical behaviour within the institution.

- 4.3. The institution publishes on its website clear, accurate, objective, up-to-date and readily accessible information about its activities, including programmes. The

information available shall be sufficient for prospective students to be able to make an informed choice in terms of the knowledge, skills and competences they are likely to acquire on successful completion of the programme. The information provided shall be in accordance with the MFHEA regulations.

Panel's Findings:

While the institution provides general information about its programmes and activities on its website, the panel found that key mandatory information was not publicly available at the time of the review, specifically with regard to tuition fees.

MFHEA requirements stipulate that prospective students must have access to clear, complete, and up-to-date information enabling informed decision-making. The absence of essential elements such as fees constitutes a material gap in compliance at licensing stage, regardless of the existence of internal documentation

- 4.4. The institution has defined information management regulations, including on data protection and the protection of user privacy, aligned with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) provisions.

Panel's Findings:

Information management and GDPR compliance are addressed through internal regulations and consent forms, and the use of digital systems is described. However, the panel notes that data analytics derived from digital tools (LMS/VLE) are not yet clearly integrated into institutional review and decision-making processes, despite claims to this effect.

Performance indicators 4.5 to 4.8 need to be met once the institution is licenced and operational.

Additional indicators in the context of online provision:

- 4.9. Staff understand the ethical implications of their actions at all times and attention is paid to the application of principles of academic ethics in the digital and online environment.

Digital Peer's Findings:

Policies on ethics, plagiarism and academic integrity apply to digital provision, and interviews suggest staff have general awareness of these matters.

4.10. The institution has developed clear policies that cover issues such as recording of lectures and meetings, acceptable use, security, data protection, ownership of intellectual property, avoidance of creative theft, and commercialisation of ideas developed by staff and students.

Digital Peer's Findings:

Evidence exists across documents on academic integrity, AI use, registry systems and related governance matters.

4.11. The digital tools used by the provider, e.g., virtual learning environment (VLE), learning management system (LMS), communication tools and resources, leave a digital footprint; the data is analysed and included in the review process, with full respect to data protection regulations.

Digital Peer's Findings:

The LMS can generate activity logs and analytics, and demo confirmed that activity data is visible at admin and lecturer level. There is also reference to student follow-up when learners lag. However, interview evidence suggests that analytics capability may currently be basic, and it remains unclear how consistently such data feeds into formal review cycles.

Judgement: Substantially Compliant

Recommendations:

- It is recommended that the institution ensure full compliance with MFHEA requirements regarding public information by making all mandatory information, including tuition fees, clearly available, accurate, and easily accessible on its website prior to the commencement of operations. This should enable prospective students to make fully informed decisions regarding their studies.

Standard 5: Teaching and administrative staff

Main Findings according to the criteria of Minimal Indicators:

5.1. A comprehensive set of policies is accessible to all teaching and administrative staff. It includes provisions referring to recruitment, rights and responsibilities, performance evaluation, promotion and professional development.

Panel's Findings:

A set of policies on teaching and administrative staff on recruitment, rights and responsibilities, performance evaluation, promotion and professional development exist and interview evidence provided that teaching and administrative staff were aware of such policies.

5.2. The institution has defined clear, fair and transparent processes for the recruitment and appointment of all staff; these promote academic and professional expertise and are considerate of gender balance within the staff body.

Panel's Findings:

A set of clear, fair and transparent recruitment and appointment processes exist that promote professional and academic expertise and that take into account gender balance exist. Interview evidence provided that both teaching and administrative staff were aware of such processes.

5.3. The qualifications of teaching staff are at least one degree higher than the qualifications achieved by its completion. This requirement may be waived in justified cases, such as foreign language lecturers, industry guests, specialists and doctoral candidates.

Panel's Findings:

The CVs of the proposed lecturers indicate that their qualifications are at least one level higher than those to be awarded to students upon completion of the programmes, with the exception of industry guest lecturers. This was further confirmed during interviews with academic staff.

- 5.4. Arrangements are made for part-time and sessional teaching staff; in the case of teaching staff providing limited and ad hoc services, institutions monitor professional development activities that ensure they are up to date with developments in their fields and with the methodological requirements of their programmes.

Panel's Findings:

Documentation was provided to show that teaching staff follow CPD to keep up to date with developments in their respective fields. This was further confirmed during interviews.

- 5.5. The number of teaching staff allows a student-staff ratio which is adequate for the optimal delivery of education, including the support necessary for students, and is comparable to European best practice.

Panel's Findings:

The student/staff ratio is of 25 and is comparable to European best practice. Interview evidence confirmed the same student/staff ratio of 25 though these were based on current student projections.

- 5.6. The workload of teaching staff is appropriately quantified and regularly monitored; it includes the teaching contact hours, preparation, evaluation and complementary functions, including development activities. Teaching loads are taking into account the nature of teaching requirements in different fields of study.

Panel's Findings:

The institution has established a system for determining teaching workload, which includes contact hours, preparation, assessment, and additional activities such as thesis supervision. Interview evidence from academic staff confirmed the existence of this workload model.

- 5.7. The institution has a clear plan for all staff professional development for its full-time staff that is strategically driven, has a structured approach for identifying such needs, and allocates appropriate resources for its implementation.

Panel's Findings:

The institution has a plan related to staff professional development for its full-time staff that is strategically driven. This plan includes a system

to identify training needs and has a clear budget allocation to training. Interview evidence confirmed that staff were aware of the existence of this plan.

- 5.8. Criteria and processes for performance evaluation are clearly specified and made known in advance to all staff; performance review also informs professional development aims.

Panel's Findings:

A set of criteria and processes for performance evaluation are clearly specified and are provided to all staff and performance review is linked to professional development aims. Interview evidence showed that both academics and administrative staff were aware of the existence of such policies.

Performance indicators 5.9 to 5.15 need to be met once the institution is licensed and operational.

Additional indicators in the context of online provision:

- 5.16. New staff orientation includes induction into the support mechanisms for tracking student participation and engagement in online courses and guiding students to support units in case of challenges.

Digital Peer's Findings:

Staff development and induction processes include training in digital systems, LMS usage, and student monitoring. Documentation evidences staff development related to tracking engagement through LMS and learning analytics.

- 5.17. The institution provides and/or facilitates for its academic staff specific training in online and blended learning, such as online learning design, developing and implementing pedagogies for online and blended learning, or successful delivery of online and blended learning.

Digital Peer's Findings:

The provider has documented CPD activities covering online standards, course production, LMS use, accessibility and learning analytics. Interviews with lecturers confirmed exposure to platform training and some online teaching preparation, though

some staff indicated that further pedagogical training is still needed. Overall, there is sufficient evidence of structured and relevant staff development.

Judgement: Compliant

Recommendations:

- It is recommended that the provider ensure regular CPD on online pedagogy.

Standard 6: Design, monitoring and review of programmes

Main Findings according to the criteria of Minimal Indicators:

6.1. The institution has formalised policies and procedures for the design of its programmes, which it implements effectively in practice.

Panel's Findings:

A set of policies and procedures for programme design is in place. Interview evidence indicated that staff were aware of and applying these policies in the development of programmes. However, academic staff were not involved in the initial design process, as they joined the institution at a later stage.

6.2. In designing its programmes, the institution is guided by its mission and the needs of the labour market. The choice of study programmes is based on up-to-date sectoral know-how such as, but not limited to, market analysis, Political, Economic, Social and Technological (PEST) analysis, and demographic research.

Panel's Findings:

Although programme design is presented as being informed by labour market needs, the panel did not obtain sufficient evidence of direct and systematic engagement with employers or employer organisations, particularly within the Maltese context. Evidence presented during interviews indicated reliance on intermediary consultancy input rather than direct labour market consultation. This does not fully satisfy the requirement for stakeholder-driven programme design.

6.3. The institution ensures that the design process reflects the following characteristics:

- a) they define the expected student workload in terms of ECTS credits; expected student workloads are realistic and consistent with the calculation that, on average, 1 ECTS credit equals 25 study hours;
- b) they indicate the target audience, including any geographic/regional targeting, and the minimum eligibility and selection criteria, where applicable;
- c) they are learning outcome-based, distinguishing between knowledge, skills and competences;
- d) they indicate appropriate learning dynamics and a measure of tutor-student and peer-learning interaction as is appropriate for the course level and content;
- e) they indicate appropriate resources and forms of assessment;
- f) they provide students with opportunities to elect non-compulsory components;
- g) they indicate the minimum requirements in terms of qualifications and competences for teaching staff;
- h) they indicate the person/s responsible for:
 - i) course design and content development;
 - ii) technical support;
 - iii) teaching the course and interacting and supporting students;
- i) they are in line with the Malta Qualifications Framework (MQF) and the Malta Referencing Report 2012 and subsequent updates;
- j) the process of identification of training programme needs involves the participation of external stakeholders who are likely to benefit from the outcomes of such provision;
- k) programmes that are employment-oriented involve stakeholders from the world of work in their design;

- l) they are designed so that they enable smooth student progression;
- m) they involve students in their design;
- n) they are subject to a formal institutional approval process.

Panel's Findings:

The institution has established a comprehensive framework for programme design covering all required elements. The documentation submitted by the institution includes references to stakeholder consultations, governance discussions, and the involvement of an external student representative from a partner institution. While documentation referred to stakeholder and student involvement, the panel was not able to sufficiently verify the consistency, depth, and practical implementation of this involvement during the interviews. In particular, the institution was unable to demonstrate clear and systematic evidence of how stakeholder and student input had meaningfully influenced programme design and curriculum development in practice.

With regard to indicator 6.3(m), although the institution referred to the participation of a single external PhD student from a partner institution, the panel did not consider this sufficient to demonstrate systematic student involvement in programme design. Furthermore, the panel was unable to meet the referenced student representative during the review process, including virtually, which limited the possibility of confirming the effectiveness and extent of the claimed participation.

6.4. The programmes' structure and content ensure a logical sequencing of their components, a relevant balance between theoretical and practical activities, and sufficient opportunities for students to achieve the learning outcomes within a reasonable timeframe.

Panel's Findings:

The programme's structure and content ensures a logical sequencing and a good balance between theory and practice and opportunities for students to achieve the

learning outcomes with a reasonable timeframe. Interview evidence confirmed the logical sequencing as well as the balance between theory and practice.

6.5. In developing its programmes, the institution conducts comparative analyses of similar programmes in leading foreign higher education institutions.

Panel's Findings:

The institution has a number of cooperation agreements with a number of other higher education providers that are used in order to conduct comparative analyses of similar programmes. Interview evidence showed that staff were aware of these cooperation agreements and that they were used to compare their programmes.

6.6. The programmes' design is conducted in close engagement with internal and external stakeholders, including administrative staff, external academic peers, students and employers.

Panel's Findings:

While stakeholder engagement is described in policy, the panel did not find sufficient evidence of systematic and documented involvement of stakeholders in programme design.

In particular:

- no confirmed student participation,
- no sufficient evidence of direct and systematic involvement of stakeholders from the world of work in programme design and review processes beyond consultancy-related participation, limited traceability of stakeholder input into programme outcomes.

Performance indicators 6.7 to 6.12 need to be met once the institution is licensed and operational.

Additional indicators in the context of online provision:

6.13. Programmes designed for online and blended delivery cater for any specific particularities at the level of learning outcomes, their delivery and assessment, and pedagogies that enhance student interaction and gauge student learning in digital environments.

Digital Peer's Findings:

Programme design and delivery are governed by the Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) system, with specific attention to online pedagogies, assessment methods, and interaction in digital environments.

During the pre-review online meeting, the provider indicated that delivery is planned to take place primarily in real time. However, in response to questions regarding students in different time zones, it was also confirmed that sessions would be recorded. In addition, references to asynchronous delivery were identified, and programme application documents include references to a hybrid model alongside online provision.

Overall, the intended mode of delivery is not consistently defined across documentation and discussions.

6.14. Online and blended programmes are reviewed through established quality assurance methods that have been adapted to the specific pedagogical and methodological approaches.

Digital Peer's Findings:

The online programme is planned to be reviewed through established institutional mechanisms. However, online review currently mirrors face-to-face QA practice more than it demonstrates a mature online-specific review model. It is advisable that quality assurance methods are adapted to online pedagogy, digital engagement, online assessment and virtual learner experience.

Judgement: Partially compliant

Recommendations:

- Establish documented stakeholder consultation processes, including students, employers, and academic peers, with clear evidence of their impact on programme design.
- Ensure consistent and transparent articulation of the delivery model (synchronous/asynchronous/hybrid), aligned across documentation and implementation.

Standard 7: Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment

Main Findings according to the criteria of Minimal Indicators:

7.1. The teaching methods and learning environments are planned to be student-centred and to stimulate students' motivation, self-reflection and engagement in the learning process. This includes:

- a) enabling flexible learning paths;
- b) considering the different modes of delivery, where appropriate;
- c) using innovation in pedagogical methods, including digital technologies;
- d) providing students with adequate support from the teaching staff.

Panel's Findings:

GMBS presents a learning model built primarily around online delivery, with structured LMS-based course design, asynchronous access to materials, applied tasks and mentorship components. The documentation indicates that flexibility, accessibility and applied learning are core principles of the pedagogical model.

The panel acknowledges that the system is conceptually aligned with student-centred learning, particularly in its flexibility and accommodation of working professionals. The LMS structure supports independent learning and progression.

7.2. The assessment system is designed in a way that ensures:

- a) the criteria for and method of assessment as well as criteria for marking are published in advance in a way that is understandable to students;
- b) if possible, more than one staff member is involved in the development of assessment tasks and student assessments;

- c) the achieved learning outcomes are analysed in relation to the intended outcomes;
- d) the regulations for assessment take into account mitigating circumstances;
- e) there are quality management arrangements in place to ensure the fitness for purpose of the assessment (validity, reliability, efficiency, transparency, fairness, authenticity, adequacy of feedback); this may include the usage of rubrics, second grading, internal moderation, external examination, usage of anti-plagiarism software.

Panel's Findings:

Assessment regulations describe published criteria, grading mechanisms, mitigating circumstances, and the use of anti-plagiarism tools and proctoring systems in online assessments. Rubrics and structured evaluation approaches are referenced, and there is formal provision for integrity safeguards.

7.3. The institution regulates the maximum number of opportunities a student is granted to pass one given assessment.

Panel's Findings:

Regulations specify limits on assessment attempts and progression conditions. These provisions appear clear and formally aligned with regulatory expectations.

7.4. The institution has an appeal procedure which is well disseminated, makes clear the grounds on which academic appeals may be based, the criteria for decisions, and the remedies available.

Panel's Findings:

Appeal procedures are documented, and the grounds for appeal are outlined in institutional regulations.

7.5. Where applicable, a work-based learning/internship is integrated with speciality studies and students are provided with adequate supervision; there are detailed procedures defined to ensure the specific contribution of the work-based learning/internship to the programme's learning outcomes.

Panel's Findings:

N/A

7.6. The institution has clearly defined the responsibilities for the supervisors of theses at all levels, including PhD students.

Panel's Findings:

N/A

7.7. The high standard for the evaluation and defence of theses is ensured through transparent and fair procedures and by the involvement of highly qualified academic staff in the process, including those coming from outside the institution.

Panel's Findings:

The institution has defined eligibility requirements and approval procedures for thesis supervisors, including oversight through the Scientific Council.

Performance indicators 7.8 – 7.12 need to be met once the institution is licensed and operational.

Additional indicators in the context of online provision:

7.13. Teaching, learning and assessment are adapted to online and blended delivery and closely aligned with digital resources.

Digital Peer's Findings:

Overall, the assessment strategy is aligned with the learning outcomes of the available online MBA and demonstrates balance between formative and summative assessment. The emphasis on applied tasks and research enhances academic rigour and workplace relevance, while asynchronous delivery increases accessibility for working professionals. Still, stronger provision may be needed for real-time interaction, oral performance and live problem-solving, especially if delivery remains effectively asynchronous in practice.

7.14. Online and blended arrangements cater for activities that exploit active, constructive, cooperative and authentic learning, as well as student-to-tutor and student-to-student interaction in digital environments.

Digital Peer's Findings:

The provider's LMS includes forums, quizzes, structured materials and collaborative possibilities, and lecturers referred to case studies and discussion-based methods. However, the demonstration and interviews suggested that the current environment is still heavily oriented towards self-study content, while live session tools and interaction arrangements were not yet fully configured. This limits confidence in the consistency of student-to-student and student-to-tutor interaction.

7.15. In online assessments, measures, such as online proctoring systems, are taken to require confirmation of the identity of the test taker and the integrity of the test taker environment.

Digital Peer's Findings:

The intention to use online proctoring and anti-plagiarism tools is stated. However, interview evidence confirmed that the proctoring solution was still to be purchased or

finalised at the time of the visit. This means implementation evidence is not yet complete. The provider is to ensure that proctoring and integrity systems are setup, tested, governed by policy, and communicated clearly before online assessments commence.

Judgement: Substantially Compliant

Recommendations:

- Finalise and implement a fully operational online assessment integrity framework, including proctoring tools and governance procedures.
- Strengthen interactive and real-time learning components to ensure consistent student engagement.

Standard 8: Student administration and student support services

Main Findings according to the criteria of Minimal Indicators:

- 8.1. Accurate and reliable information about the institution, including the range of programmes, admissions procedures, services, scholarship opportunities, tuition and administrative fees, and other relevant information, is made publicly available to prospective students and other interested parties.

Panel's Findings: Not met

Although internal policies exist, the panel found that public information available to prospective students was incomplete, specifically due to the absence of tuition fee information on the institutional website.

This constitutes a clear noncompliance with transparency requirements at licensing stage.

- 8.2. Admissions requirements are clearly specified and appropriately determined for the institution and its programmes.

Panel's Findings:

Admissions criteria are formally defined and aligned with the MQF level of the programmes. The documentation outlines entry requirements and recognition procedures.

- 8.3. A comprehensive set of policies is made widely available within the institution, providing clear and transparent information required for all phases of the student "life cycle" – admission, assessment, progression, suspension and termination of student status, mobility, recognition, certification and qualification award –

including all concerning regulations, the rights and responsibilities of students, Code of Conduct, actions to be taken for breaches of conduct, responsibilities of relevant officers and committees, and penalties that may be imposed. Policies cater for the social dimension of higher education by taking active measures to safeguard the equity, inclusion and diversity of the student body.

Panel's Findings:

The institution has developed regulations addressing admission, progression, suspension, termination, academic misconduct, and student rights. These appear comprehensive and aligned with regulatory expectations.

The framework reflects attention to due process and formal safeguards

8.4. The institution regulates the maximum time a student can spend inactive within the institution (without engaging with their academic commitments and assessments) before their enrolment status is terminated and the student expelled.

Panel's Findings:

Provisions exist regulating maximum inactivity periods and termination of student status. These appear clearly defined.

8.5. There is a student agreement between the institution and each student which protects student rights and lawful interests.

Panel's Findings:

A student agreement framework is referenced, outlining rights, obligations and institutional responsibilities. This demonstrates awareness of contractual clarity in an online education context.

8.6. Appropriate policies and procedures are in place to deal with academic misconduct, including plagiarism and other forms of conduct breach.

Panel's Findings:

Academic misconduct procedures, including plagiarism and integrity safeguards, are documented and supported by digital detection tools.

8.7. The institution has made provision for academic tutors to support student progress as needed, as well as services for career development and psychological support. The needs of a diverse student population (including mature, part-time, employed and international students as well as students with special needs) has been taken into account when planning the student support services.

Panel's Findings:

The institution outlines provision for academic support, career guidance and psychological assistance, including arrangements tailored to online students and those with specific needs.

The panel acknowledges that student support structures are formally embedded in the institutional framework.

Performance indicators 8.8 to 8.15 need to be met once the institution is licensed and operational.

Additional indicators in the context of online provision:

8.16. Online support resources contribute to the creation of real engagement between the staff and students; direct support provided through a virtual communication system, such as a forum, a live video session, email or pre-recorded videos, are considered contact hours.

Digital Peer's Findings:

The provider plans to support through LMS tools, forums, email, recordings, recordings and live sessions, and recognises virtual engagement as part of the support structure.

8.17. Learning Management Systems (LMS) provide activity log data about students' access to material and tasks in online and blended delivery; such data and learning analytics are checked and analysed to identify students who are lagging on online tasks and participation, assisting the institution in identifying students at risk.

Digital Peer's Findings:

Activity logs are available, and interviewees stated that students who lag behind would be contacted by the study department. Still, the process appears dependent on roles that are not yet fully formalised, and evidence of a mature early-alert workflow remains limited.

8.18. Information on whom to contact and where to seek technical support (for the LMS, VLE, email, proctoring systems, and learning resources) is presented to students on the institutional website, on course syllabi, and in the LMS; a chat room option is provided when possible.

Digital Peer's Findings:

Support information is available through the website, syllabi and LMS.

8.19. Students' orientation programme includes guidance on how student administration and support services can be accessed online.

Digital Peer's Findings:

Orientation and student information frameworks include guidance on accessing administration and support services online.

Judgement: Substantially Compliant

Recommendations:

- Ensure full compliance of public information prior to enrolment, particularly regarding fees and programme details.
- Define and standardise student support workflows, including response times and escalation procedures

Standard 9: Learning resources and facilities

Main Findings according to the criteria of Minimal Indicators:

9.1. The premises dedicated for the educational and administrative activities of the institution are under the ownership or lawful possession (lease) of the institution.

Panel's Findings:

The provider is an online provider and does not currently have premises and provider would be exempt from the provisions of standard 9.1 However, interview evidence showed that there is the possibility of establishing some physical presence but no detailed indication about premises were provided and thus could not check whether standard 9.1 would be met.

9.2. The institution provides an adequate, attractive and well-maintained physical environment of both buildings and grounds. Facilities fully meet relevant Maltese legislation and regulations.

Panel's Findings:

N/A

Same comment as for standard 9.1 applies here

9.3. Appropriate provision for both facilities and learning resources is made for students and staff with physical disabilities or other special needs (such as visual or hearing impairments).

Panel's Findings:

Interview evidence showed that facilities and learning resources could cater for student or staff with physical disabilities or other special needs. However, no concrete example could be provided since there had not yet been such a case.

9.4. A library and other associated facilities and services are available for extended hours beyond normal class time to ensure access when required by users.

Panel's Findings:

The library and facilities are online and are available and accessible outside hours
Interview evidence confirmed that this was the case

9.5. Up-to-date computer equipment and software are available and accessible for staff and students throughout the institution to support electronic access to resources and reference material.

Panel's Findings:

Interview evidence confirmed that staff and students have access to up-to-date computer equipment and software.

9.6. Books, journals and other materials, including online databases, are available in Maltese, English or other languages, as required for programmes and research organised at the institution. The main literature listed in the syllabi is made available by the institution either in hard copy or electronic format.

Panel's Findings:

Interview evidence confirmed that books, journals and other materials, including online databases are available in the languages of tuition of the institutions. The literature listed in syllabi is made available online.

9.7. Technical support is available for staff and students using information and communications technology. Training programmes are provided to ensure effective use of computing equipment and appropriate software for assessments, teaching and administration.

Panel's Findings:

An online demo of the portal was provide showcasing the various features of the online platform. Interview evidence confirmed the availability of technical support.

9.8. Institutions that offer digital education shall ensure that their digital infrastructure has:

- a) automated procedures to ensure continuity of service in case of failure of their equipment or software;
- b) backup systems, including real-time mirroring of data, full/incremental backups on site, and full/incremental backups offsite on physical data.

Panel's Findings:

Documentation and Interview evidence showed that the institution has automated procedures to ensure continuity of service in the case of failure of equipment and software as well as backup systems including real time mirroring of data and backups on site.

Performance indicators 9.9 to 9.12 need to be met once the institution is licensed and operational.

Additional indicators in the context of online provision:

9.13. Any third-party digital resources purchased by the institution are scalable (expanded or upgraded to cater for an increased demand), avoid vendor lock-in (by using established standards) and are covered by a service-level agreement for maintenance and support by the vendor.

Digital Peer's Findings:

Documentation and interview evidence support the existence of external technical partnerships, hosting safeguards, backups and data migration possibilities. This points to scalability and continuity planning. No major concern emerged, though operational maturity will need to be demonstrated in practice.

9.14. Staff and students are able to access most of the institutional resources online without the need for being physically on campus; this is included in the orientation programme of new students.

Digital Peer's Findings:

The provider presents itself as an online institution and the evidence indicates that core learning and institutional resources will be accessible remotely. Interviews and documentation support this position, including the availability of an online library and digital systems.

9.15. Students are able to access digital resources without the need to invest in high-end and expensive hardware and software. Resources are accessible on computing devices (both traditional laptops/desktops and smaller mobile devices like smartphones and tablets) with average specifications.

Digital Peer's Findings: Met

Average devices are sufficient for participation, and the online platform is intended to be accessible across common devices.

Judgement: Compliant

Recommendations:

- N/A

Standard 10: Research, development and/or other creative activity

(applicable only to universities and providers that deliver programmes at MQF Level 8)

Standard not applicable.

Standard 11: Institutional cooperation, service to society and internationalisation

Main Findings according to the criteria of Minimal Indicators:

11.1. The institution includes in its strategic priorities, objectives pertaining to institutional cooperation, service to society and internationalisation. There are clear indicators defining the institutional priorities in these areas.

Panel's Findings:

GMBS refers in its mission and strategic documents to cooperation with higher education institutions, business, the public sector and NGOs, as well as to participation in international projects and mobility. These priorities are reflected in the Long-Term Plan and are also linked to the institution's plans to attract an international student body and operate across more than one language.

The panel is satisfied that these themes are present in the institution's strategic direction. At the same time, the objectives remain broad and, at this stage, are described more in terms of planned activities than clearly measurable outcomes. For a provider at licensing stage, this is understandable to a point, but it also means that the practical direction and likely impact of this area are not yet fully clear.

11.2. There are budgetary allocations dedicated to institutional cooperation, service to society and internationalisation to enable the achievement of its objectives in these areas.

Panel's Findings:

The documentation does not show a clearly ring-fenced budget line labelled specifically for internationalisation or service to society. However, the panel did find evidence that these activities are intended to be supported through the institution's overall planning and budgeting framework.

The SAR explains that GMBS operates through an interconnected framework of a Long-Term Plan, Business Plan and Financial Plan, and states that the annual Financial Plan is used to support the implementation of institutional priorities. It also notes that the budget is aligned with strategic objectives and approved through the institution's budgeting process.

In addition, the SAR identifies international relations, cooperation with partner institutions, mobility, conferences, joint projects, and engagement with public and private-sector actors as planned institutional activities.

Taken together, this is enough for the panel to conclude that financial provision for these areas is foreseen within the institution's broader resource planning. That said, the evidence remains fairly general. It is not yet clear how much funding will be devoted to these activities in practice, how priorities will be set, or how spending will be tracked against results.

11.3. Local employers and members of professions are invited to join relevant committees or other structural units considering study programmes and other institutional activities.

Panel's Findings:

GMBS states in its documentation that employers and other external stakeholders are expected to contribute to programme development and evaluation, and the internal framework allows for this kind of involvement.

However, during the visit the panel did not see convincing evidence that this had already been put into practice in a meaningful way. In particular, there was no clear example of local employers or professional representatives actively participating in committees or structured programme-related discussions at the time of the review.

For that reason, the panel concludes that this indicator is not yet met.

Performance indicators 11.4 – 11.9 need to be met once the institution is licensed and operational.

Judgement: Partially Compliant

Recommendations:

- Move from planned to demonstrable stakeholder engagement, particularly with employers and professional bodies.
- Focus on operational partnerships with tangible outcomes, rather than formal agreements alone.
- Focus on operational partnerships with tangible outcomes, rather than formal agreements alone.

Panel Member Signatures

The audit report is compiled by the peer review panel:

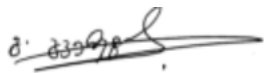
Chair of Review Panel: Dr Maiki Udam



Peer Reviewer: Dr Robert Suban



Student Peer Reviewer: Gaga Gvenetadze



Digital Reviewer: Keith Aquilina



Annexes

Annex 1: Agenda and Accreditation Visit Agenda

Accreditation Visit - **GMBS Global Management Business School**

Date – 5th & 6th March 2026

Time	Meetings
08.00 – 08.30	Arrival at the venue: MFHEA and peer review panel private meeting
08.30 – 09.30	Meeting with the Head of Institution
09.30 – 09.45	Internal peer review panel meeting
09.45 – 10.15	Meeting with Board of Directors
10.15 – 10.30	Internal peer review panel meeting
10.30 – 12.15	Meeting with Managing/Academic director – VLE and technical support
	Meeting with IT Team/Head of Online Learning/IT personnel: <i>Virtual tour and access to a fully built sample module of the provider's online platform, including all learning materials, assessments and interactive elements</i>
12.15 – 13.00	Working lunch and peer review panel discussion
13.00 – 13.30	Meeting with Vice Rector
13.30 – 13.15	Internal peer review panel meeting
13.15 – 14.15	Meeting with Internal Quality Assurance

14.15 – 14.30	Internal peer review panel meeting
14.30 – 15.00	Meeting with Registrar/ Academic Secretary also covering HR, resources and admin.
15.00 – 15.15	Closure of day one

Time	Meetings
08.00 – 08.30	Arrival at the venue: MFHEA and peer review panel private meeting
08.30 – 10.00	Meeting with lecturers/future lecturers also covering programme design
10.00 – 11.30	Final internal peer review panel meeting
11.30 – 12.00	Additional meeting with Head of Institution and Facilitator
12.00 – 12.30	Working lunch and peer review panel discussion
12.30 – 13.00	Conclusion of the onsite visit Meeting with HOI – Brief overview of main findings

Annex 2: Review Panel Bio Notes

Chair of Review Panel: Dr Maiki Udam

Maiki Udam is an experienced expert in quality assurance within higher education, with extensive leadership roles in both national and international capacities. Currently, as the Head of the Department of Study Quality at the Estonian Education and Youth Board, she oversees key areas including high school exams, PISA, and the support system for students with special educational needs. Her role also includes responsibility for academic recognition (Estonian ENIC/NARIC).

Previously, she served as the Head of Higher Education at the Estonian Quality Agency for Education, where she developed and implemented evaluation processes for higher education institutions and led the revision of the Estonian Qualifications Framework.

As an Independent Consultant, Maiki contributed to various international quality assurance projects, including strategies for lifelong learning and vocational education in Belarus, and quality assurance in higher education projects in Kosovo and Tajikistan. She has also evaluated quality agencies in several countries, including France, the UK, and Egypt.

With a doctoral degree in Quality Assurance in Higher Education, her expertise spans strategic planning, external reviews, and institutional accreditation, making her a respected figure in shaping educational quality standards both in Estonia and abroad.

Peer Reviewer: Dr Robert M. Suban

Dr. Robert M. Suban is Senior Lecturer and Head of the Department of Banking, Finance and Investments at the University of Malta. He holds a BBA (Paris), Master's (Bruges), and a Ph.D. in Accounting and Finance from Alliance Manchester Business School, and is a qualified ACCA member. Dr. Suban previously served as Head of Institution at the London School of Commerce, Malta, and has held positions at the Central Bank of Malta, Jobsplus, and in the private sector. He is also a Non-Executive Director of Bank of Valletta plc and Malita Investments plc.

Student Reviewer: Mr Gaga Gvenetadze

Gaga has a diverse academic background, which includes a Bachelor's degree in Psychology from Tbilisi State University, two Master's degrees in Global Governance, Intercultural Relations, and Peace Process Management from Siena, and an Education Administration degree from Ilia State University. Gaga, now pursuing a Ph.D. in Applied Social Psychology at Tbilisi State University, has been invited as an expert in Higher

Education Quality Assurance by several European agencies. He has actively participated in national and international evaluations and, as a coordinator for the national quality assurance agency, has helped to participate in the development of Georgia's quality assurance system. Gaga has been a member of ESU's QA Student Experts Pool since 2021, and he has also worked as a student representative for the Higher Education Authorisation Council of Georgia. His interests include quality assurance, international student acculturation, diversity, and sustainability in higher education.

Digital Reviewer: Mr Keith Aquilina

With over two decades of experience in the education sector, Keith Aquilina specialises in digital education and quality assurance. His current role is that of Education Officer (Quality Assurance) at the Directorate for Quality and Standards in Education and visiting lecturer at the Maltese Teacher Trainer Institute (IfE). Currently, he is involved in the European Commission's IFRAG and DEC expert groups. He holds a Master's in Online and Distance Education from the Open University, UK, along with a diploma in computing and a pedagogy degree from the University of Malta.



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