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GENERAL INFORMATION

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		Updated 3.1.3. (3), 3.1.6, 3.1.7 and 3.1.9 and Appendix 1 to explain that: a) Proposals for new programmes at Masters Level are to be submitted for endorsement by the Masters Degree Committee prior to EMT approval; b) In the case of courses being requested by MG2i, the hosting Institute is exempted from the need to conduct internal and external stakeholder feedback. It is thus the responsibility of MG2i to conduct the feedback and retain appropriate records. c) An approval by EMT of a course intended for marketing by MG2i does not (approval) necessarily imply that the course can be delivered to courses for nonpaying students (MCAST offering).		
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	76/2025	15.12.2025	Mr Ramon Mangion; Mr Marius Mifsud; Mr Albert Agius	
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	A number of changes applied to the document to align the process to: 1. The new accreditation process divided into 2 stages 2. the APC process and the new documentation structure (forms which were approved in previous VPC)			

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Introduction

This document explains the process for the accreditation of qualifications from MQF/EQF Level Intro A to MQF/EQF Level 7, implemented at MCAST as part of its self-accrediting status, granted unto it by the MFHEA under Subsidiary Legislation 607.03¹.

The process is divided into two distinct phases which include:

1. The submission (by the course proposer) and recommendation for approval by the Academic Programmes Committee (APC) to the Vocational and Professional Council (VPC) of a proposal (DOC 341) or cyclical review documentation (DOC 168),
2. The writing, development and accreditation of any new and/or updated units forming the micro credential; award; qualification or part thereof and their approval at VPC (as per the requirements of the MCAST Act of 2023)

Any microcredential; award or qualification, accredited under this process will only be accredited once both phases are completed in full, and signed-off by the VPC.

1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF DOCUMENT

- 1.1. The design, development and approval of new accredited courses/programmes is a key process at MCAST.

As a self-accrediting institution, MCAST is required to follow:

- a) Accreditation rules as stipulated in the National Quality Assurance Framework for Further and Higher Education,
- b) The MFHEA Standards for Design, Development and Approval of Programmes,
- c) The MFHEA Programme Accreditation Standards for Higher Education,
- d) The MFHEA External Quality Assurance Provider Accreditation Manual for Higher Education Institutions,
- e) And any other subsequent revisions or superseding documentation/regulations issued.

Within this context, the aim of this procedure is to describe the design, development and approval procedure.

- 1.2. This procedure applies to design, development and approval of new MCAST accredited / non-accredited courses / programmes / units of study up to EQF/MQF 7.
- 1.3. This procedure also covers the internal accreditation of foreign qualifications offered by MCAST as per the MFHEA Programme Accreditation Standards for Higher Education

¹ SUBSIDIARY LEGISLATION 607.03 FURTHER AND HIGHER EDUCATION (LICENSING, ACCREDITATION AND QUALITY ASSURANCE) REGULATIONS



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2. POLICY

2.1. It is the policy of MCAST that design and development process of an accredited programme:

- a) is in line with the provisions of the MCAST Act;
- b) defines the expected student workload in terms of ECTS credits; expected student workloads are realistic and consisted with the calculation that 1 ECTS credit equals 25 study hours;
- c) indicates the target audience, including any geographic / regional targeting, and the minimum eligibility and selection criteria, where applicable;
- d) is learning outcome-based, distinguishing between knowledge, skills and competences;
- e) indicates appropriate learning dynamics and a measure of tutor-learner and peer-learning interaction as is appropriate for the course level and content;
- f) indicates appropriate resources and forms of assessment;
- g) provides learners with opportunities to elect non-compulsory components, where applicable;
- h) identifies specific units as core units within the programme, where applicable as defined in the programme regulations Doc 003, Doc 004 and Doc 005;
- i) indicates the minimum requirements in terms of qualifications and competences for teaching staff;
- j) indicates the person/s responsible for overseeing programme design and development;
- k) is in line with the MQF and the Malta Referencing Report 2024 and subsequent updates;
- l) involves the participation of external stakeholders who are likely to benefit from the outcomes of such provision;
- m) is based on up-to-date sectoral know-how such as, but not limited to, market analysis, political and demographic research;
- n) involves stakeholders from the world of work in their design, for programmes that are employment-oriented;
- o) is designed so that programmes enable smooth student progression;
- p) is subject to a formal institutional approval process.

2.2. The process shall be conducted in a way that ensures that:

- it involves students and student bodies;
- it is subject to a formal institutional approval process;
- curriculum mapping between the learning outcomes at the course and programme levels is conducted to ensure a linkage and coverage of the cognitive dimensions (knowledge, skills and competencies).
- structure of programmes and their 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;
- in developing its programmes, MCAST conducts comparative analyses of similar programmes in leading foreign higher education institutions;
- the Education and Training Programmes Department and the Office of the Registrar are consulted as necessary throughout the process.
- Monitoring, measurement and progress reporting are ongoing during the curriculum design and development process.



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3. PROPOSAL FOR THE DESIGN, DEVELOPMENT AND APPROVAL OF NEW ACCREDITED PROGRAMME

(Refer also to Appendix 1)

3.1. Approval Process of Programme Proposal – Stage 1 (Refer to Appendix 1)

- 3.1.1. A Programme Proposer reporting to the Institute Director of the hosting Institute is to be identified in order to coordinate the submission of a proposal for a newly accredited programme.
- 3.1.2. The 'Proposal Form for the Approval of New Accredited Programmes by the VPC' (Doc 341) is to be filled by the Programme Proposer.
- 3.1.3. Prior to filling in and submitting the Form (Doc 341), the new programme idea/proposal must be approved by the Board of Studies (BOS). In the case of programmes at MQF 7, the new programme idea/proposal must also be approved by the Masters Degree Committee (MDC).
- 3.1.4. The Form (Doc 341) indicates the information that is required to be submitted in the proposal, and all sections of Doc 341 are to be completed in full prior to the submission of the Form for evaluation and consideration. If the Form is submitted with missing or incomplete information, the Form will not be processed.
- 3.1.5. The completed Form together with any substantiating documentation is to be submitted by the Programme Proposer to the Institute Director (or Delegate) and subsequently to the Deputy Principal VPET for approval.
- 3.1.6. Upon approval by the Institute Director (or Delegate) and DP VPET, the Form is forwarded to the Education and Training (E&T) Programmes Department for preliminary review as per the means directed by the department.
- 3.1.7. Once the preliminary screening process is completed by E&T Dept, the form is presented to the Academic Programmes Committee (APC) for review.
- 3.1.8. The APC will review and provide feedback accordingly. Once all feedback is addressed, the Education and Training Programmes Director, Quality Assurance Director and the Registrar will sign the Form (Doc 341) on behalf of the APC, advising the Vocational Professional Council (VPC) as to whether the proposal should be: either approved and thus the Institute / Centre / Department may proceed with the full development of the programme (Stage 2 of 2); or rejected. The final decision lies with the VPC as per the authority granted by the MCAST Act.
- 3.1.9. The A&R Deputy Registrar will assign a Programme Code on the Form (Doc 341). The A&R Deputy Registrar will not assign a Programme Code unless all the required information is available in the Form (Doc 341). The Programme Code will only become effective after the document is approved by VPC.



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3.1.10. Upon endorsement by the APC, the APC will present its decisions for VPC approval either by inclusion in the VPC Agenda for discussion and approval or Via written procedure as per DOC 299. The decision taken is to then be included in the minutes of next VPC meeting. Should there be any comments and/or feedback provided by the VPC, the APC is to review such comments and/or feedback and act accordingly and liaise with the Institute Management as needed.

3.1.11. Approval by VPC of a course intended for marketing by MG2i does not necessarily imply that the course is suitable for delivery as a course for non-paying students.

3.1.12. In the case of MG2i bespoke courses, MG2i is to submit to Institute / Centre / Department a document (external stakeholder feedback) explaining the client's request. Doc 341 submissions without such feedback will be rejected.

3.1.13. Following VPC approval, the Institute / Centre / Department may then proceed to the second stage of the accreditation process, i.e. the full programme development.

3.1.14. The Education and Training Programmes Department will assign a new unit code for each new unit within the structure of the programme. Where applicable, the Education and Training Programmes Department will also draft and issue the 'Course Specification', containing the Course Description, Programme Learning Outcomes, and the full Course Structure of the programme as approved in the Form (Doc 341). The Course Specification is uploaded on the MCAST repository and Classter. The Education and Training Programmes Department then notifies the IS Department and the respective Institute(s) / Centre(s) / Department(s) of the new course specification created and uploaded on Classter via a 'Classter Updates' email.

3.1.15. In the Doc 341, Institutes / Centres / Departments have the possibility to simultaneously accredit units as stand-alone micro-credentials or awards. In such cases:

- a) The declared parameters outlined for each unit in the original accreditation of the 'main' programme cannot change. If any deviations from the original accreditation are envisaged for the micro-credentials / award, a new proposal form (Doc 341) would need to be submitted for approval.
- b) All micro-credentials / awards are to be assigned the nomenclature of "Award in ..." as part of the official programme title.
- c) The micro-credential / award cannot be marketed until the full programme (unit) description and main learning outcomes are developed and approved.
- d) The micro-credential / award cannot be sold and offered until the full unit specification is developed and approved.
- e) The A&R Deputy Registrar will assign a unique Programme Code for each micro-credential / award that is identified and approved as part of the Doc 341.

3.2. Full Development and Approval of Programme – Stage 2 (Refer to Appendix 1)

3.2.1. Following the approval of Doc 341 by VPC, the Programme Proposer will identify unit writers to compile the units as per standard 'Unit Specification Template' (Doc 338) and in compliance with the 'Manual of Standards for Writing of Unit Specifications' (Doc 339).



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- 3.2.2. The 1st draft of the unit is forwarded by the Unit Writer to the Institute Director (or delegate) for endorsement. Unit writers shall ensure that the draft versions of the unit specifications are submitted in a timely manner prior to the commencement of the admissions process.
- 3.2.3. Subject to endorsement by the Institute Director (or delegate), the 1st draft of the unit is submitted by the IVC to the Education and Training Programmes Department for internal review via the established forms and (MS Form) links.
- 3.2.4. Subsequent to the necessary iterations via document track changes between the Education and Training Programmes Department and the Unit writer, the units are individually reviewed and finalised by the Education and Training Programmes Department. Documents that are returned to the E&T Dept with track changes bypassed or missing will be rejected.
- 3.2.5. The finalised unit specifications are uploaded on the MCAST Repository and Classter by the Education and Training Programmes Department. The Education and Training Programmes Department then notifies the IS Department and the respective Institute(s) / Centre(s) / Department(s) of the new units approved and uploaded on Classter via a 'Classter Updates' email.
- 3.2.6. The APC, through the Education and Training Programmes Department, is to provide a follow up on the status of unit development to the VPC.
- 3.2.7. Once all units are finalised by the Education and Training Programmes Department, the APC, with the support of the respective Institute / Centre / Department, presents the full programme structure and each individual unit specification for the approval of the VPC.
- 3.2.8. Following the final approval of the VPC, the Programme Outline is compiled by the Education and Training Programmes Department and forwarded to the Office of the Registrar. The Programme outline shall contain the details pertaining to each individual unit that forms part of the programme, including the unit description and learning outcomes. The Programme Outline is to be made public on the MCAST website together with the Public Information Template (PIT), which is prepared by the Office of the Registrar.
- 3.2.9. The necessary updates are also inputted and uploaded on the MFHEA Qualifications Database by the Quality Assurance Department.
- 3.2.10. Upon the completion of the process, the programme is considered accredited for a period of 5 years. The programme will then be subject to a cyclical review as per the procedure outlined in Doc 028.

4. PROPOSAL FOR DESIGN, DEVELOPMENT AND APPROVAL OF A NEW NON-ACCREDITED COURSE / UNIT OF STUDY

(Refer also to Appendix 2)

4.1. Approval Process

- 4.1.1. A Programme Proposer reporting to the Institute Director is to be identified in order to coordinate the submission of a proposal for a new non-Accredited course/unit of study.



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- 4.1.2. The 'Proposal Form for Approval by VPC of a new Non-Accredited Course or a change in an existing Non-Accredited Course' (Doc 346) is to be filled by the Programme / Course Proposer and submitted to the Institute Director for endorsement. Prior to filling in and submitting the Form (Doc 346), the new programme idea/proposal must be approved by the Board of Studies (BOS).
- 4.1.3. The Form (Doc 346) indicates the information that is required to be submitted in the proposal, and all sections of Doc 346 are to be completed in full prior to the submission of the Form for evaluation and consideration. If the Form is submitted with missing or incomplete information, the Form will not be processed. Documents that are returned to the E&T Dept with track changes bypassed or missing will be rejected.
- 4.1.4. The completed Form (Doc 346) together with any substantiating documentation is to be submitted by the Programme Proposer to the Institute Director (or Delegate) and subsequently to the Deputy Principal DP VPET for approval.
- 4.1.5. Upon approval by the Institute Director (or Delegate) and DP VPET, the Form is forwarded to the Education and Training (E&T) Programmes Department for preliminary review.
- 4.1.6. Once the preliminary review process is complete, the form is presented to the Academic Programmes Committee (APC) for review.
- 4.1.7. The APC will review and provide feedback accordingly. Once all feedback is addressed, the Education and Training Programmes Director, Quality Assurance Director and the Registrar will sign the Form (Doc 346) on behalf of the APC, advising the VPC as to whether the proposal should be: either approved and thus the Institute / Centre / Department may proceed with marketing and delivery of the proposed non-accredited programme; or rejected. The final decision lies with the VPC as per the authority granted by the MCAST Act.
- 4.1.8. The A&R Deputy Registrar will assign a Programme Code on the Form (Doc 346). The A&R Deputy Registrar will not assign a Programme Code unless all the required information is available in the Form (Doc 346). The Programme Code will only become effective after this document is approved by VPC.
- 4.1.9. Upon endorsement by the APC, the APC will present its decisions for VPC approval via written procedure as per DOC 299. The decision taken is to then be included in the minutes of next VPC meeting. Should there be any comments and/or feedback provided by the VPC, the APC is to review such comments and/or feedback and act accordingly and liaise with the Programme Proposer as needed.
- 4.1.10. Approval by VPC of a course intended for marketing by MG2i does not necessarily imply that the course is suitable for delivery as a course for non-paying students.
- 4.1.11. Following VPC approval, the Institute / Centre / Department may then proceed with the marketing and delivery of the proposed non-accredited programme. The Education and Training Programmes Department will assign a new unit code for each new unit within the structure of the non-accredited programme (where applicable). The Education and Training Programmes Department then notifies the IS Department and the respective



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Institute(s) / Centre(s) / Department(s) of the new unit codes created and uploaded on Classter via a 'Classter Updates' email.

5. MONITORING AND REPORTING OF PROGRESS

5.1. As per clause 3.2.6, the Education & Training Programmes Department, through the APC, will monitor and report the progress of programme development to the VPC.

5.2. The Education and Training Programmes Department is responsible for ensuring the monitoring and reporting of all new programmes. Monitoring and reporting is carried out via the 'Curriculum Progress Status Report' (CPSR). A sample of the CPSR is provided in Appendix 3.

5.3. The CPSR makes it possible to track via a colour code the progress of every programme at the unit level. The colour code essentially indicates as follows;

- Red: No information received at the Education and Training Programmes Department
- Yellow: Unit specification was forwarded to the Education and Training Programmes Department and is pending review by an E&TP Reviewer
- Orange: Feedback was forwarded by an E&TP Reviewer to the unit writer. Currently awaiting response from unit writer.
- Green: Unit Specification has been internally accredited and approved by the Education and Training Programmes Department and hence the Institute / Centre / Department may proceed with issuing the payment to the unit writer.

5.4. The Education and Training Programmes Department is required to issue regular updates of the CPSR to the Institute Director. Institutes / Centres / Departments are provided with read-only access to the CPSRs, and are expected to monitor the progress of each programme. The IVC is also responsible for checking and confirming the status of the programme and the individual units.

6. PROGRAMME REVIEW

6.1. All approved programmes are subject to a process of periodic cyclical review as described in the document referenced below.

Reference Document

Doc 028: Programme Review Procedure

Doc 338: Accredited Unit Specification Template

Doc 339: Manual of Standards for Writing of Unit Specifications

Doc 341: Proposal Form for the Approval of New Accredited Programmes by the VPC

Doc 346: Proposal Form for Approval of a new non-Accredited Course or a Change in an Existing Non-Accredited Course

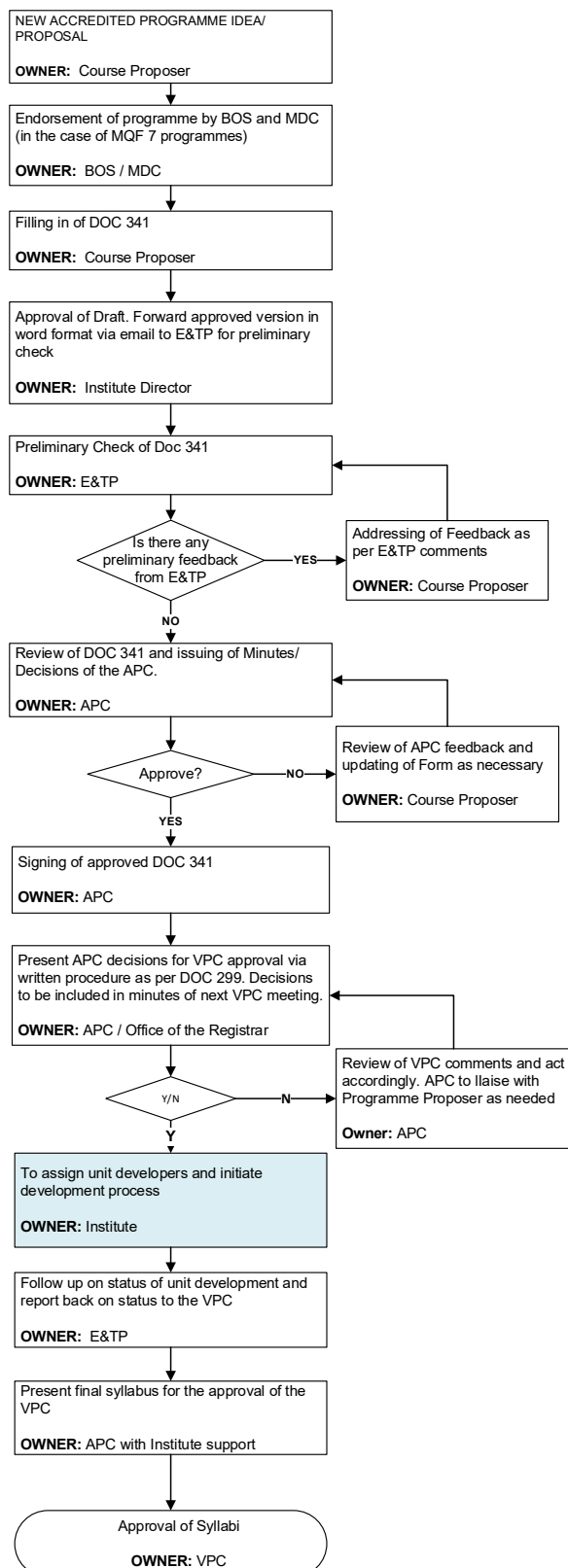


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APPENDIX 1

PROCESS FLOWCHART FOR THE APPROVAL OF NEW ACCREDITED PROGRAMMES OF STUDY (DOC 341)

THE APC
Composition: the Director E&TP (chair), the Registrar and the Director Quality Assurance (voting members), Secretary (non voting). In addition and by invitation only: Deputy Registrar ARD; Director AWBL; Institute Directors; Manager E&TP
Function: The implementation of Article 13 clause 'h' of the MCAST ACT (Chap 638 of the Laws of Malta) through delegation by the VPC.

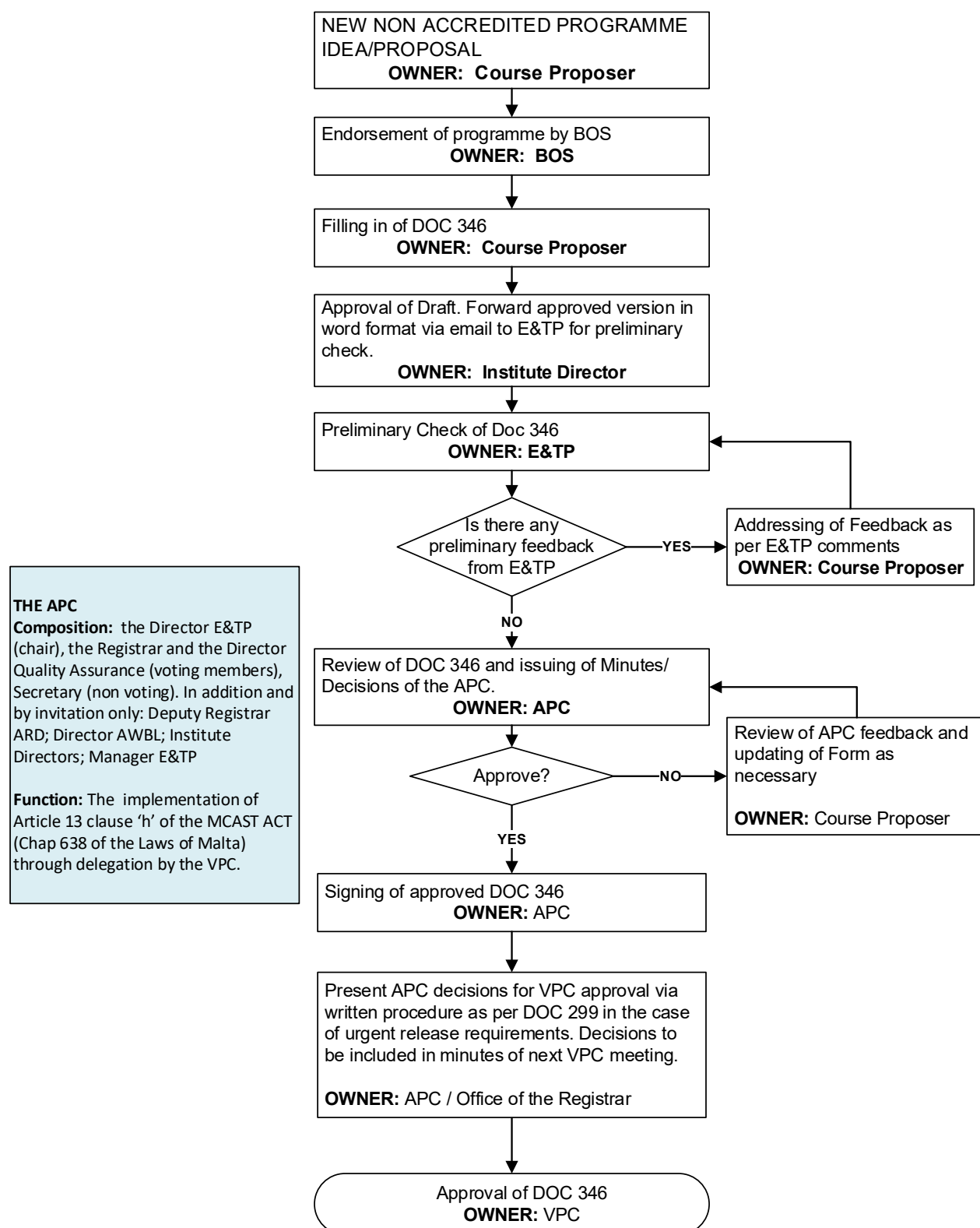




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APPENDIX 2

PROCESS FLOWCHART FOR THE APPROVAL OF NEW NON-ACCREDITED PROGRAMMES OF STUDY OR CHANGES TO EXISTING PROGRAMMES (DOC 346)





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APPENDIX 3: Sample of the CPSR

CURRICULUM PROGRESS STATUS REPORT											
Course Code		MQF Level		Programme Title		New programme OR Existing programme undergoing changes					
CPSR Issued By (E&TP Officer)		Institute		Institute Director / Delegate							
CPSR Issue Date		IVC or Course Proposer / Owner		E&TP Programme Owner							
LEGEND		Unit is finalised and approved. Proceed with payment to Unit Writer.	VPC Approval Date		Last Updated By (Name of E&TP Officer)						
		Unit specification was forwarded to E&TP and is pending review by the E&TP Reviewer.									
		Feedback was forwarded by the E&TP Reviewer to the unit writer. Awaiting response from unit writer.	Tentative launch date of programme		Last Updated On (Date)						
		No information received at E&TP.									
COURSE STRUCTURE											
Date 1st draft received by Curriculum	Unit Code	Extent of Changes	Year of Delivery	Semester	MQF Level	ECTS	Unit Title	Unit Writer	E&TP Reviewer	Comments	Status [Colour code]
										Unit finalised.	Proceed with payment
										Unit finalised.	
										Existing unit available.	Existing unit
										Existing unit available.	
										Unit is currently being reviewed.	Pending E&TP review
										Unit is currently being reviewed.	
										awaiting response from unit writer.	Pending Unit Writer Response
										awaiting response from unit writer.	
										Unit to be written.	No Information
										Unit to be written.	
Total workload						0					
General Comments:											