

Vision, Mission and Objectives

Ultrasound Academy is an educational institution that provides point-of-care ultrasound (POCUS) teaching and training for healthcare professionals. Our mission is to equip and empower healthcare workers to learn and integrate point of care ultrasound in their professional practice. We aim to achieve this by investing in 3 pillars - access to education, instrumentation and accreditation - which are critical to allowing healthcare workers to become independent ultrasound practitioners.

We are a team of practising medical professionals who have personally experienced the impact of POCUS on the practice of our profession and have a passion to pass on this knowledge and skill to other healthcare workers. We are also encouraged by the growing evidence base to support the use of bedside ultrasound as well as the endorsement of its use by numerous specialist organisations such as the American College of Emergency Physicians (ACEP) and the Royal College of Emergency Medicine (RCEM). We appreciate the value of adding POCUS to medical practice and the immense satisfaction that this brings to healthcare professionals who know that they are providing the best care for their patients.

We recognise the need to provide consistent, high-level POCUS education and accreditation for healthcare workers and it is our goal to address this need. We are convinced that ultrasound should be an essential tool for most healthcare professionals.

We are committed to provide continuous support to students as well as the necessary educational processes and logistical assistance to ensure that healthcare workers can progress in their training and gain the certification to practise independently.

Policy for Quality Assurance

The Academy focuses on delivering high-quality, up-to-date knowledge and skills, specific to the needs of its students. To safeguard a high quality of education and comply with the National Quality Assurance Framework, Ultrasound Academy has developed a robust internal quality assurance policy addressing the 11 Quality Assurance standards of the framework. This IQA policy is supplemented by the Procedures and Policies document of the Academy and these will be made available to all faculty and students who will be encouraged to become familiar with them.

COMPLAINTS, GRIEVANCES AND APPEALS

The Procedures and Policies document of the Academy outlines the steps to be followed for any complaint, enquiry or appeal. To facilitate the process, all complaints may be forwarded to the administrator at admin@ultrasoundacademy.org. These complaints will be forwarded to the relevant individuals according to the Procedures and Policies document.

The institution will have a zero-tolerance approach towards unfair discrimination, harassment, and aggression.

Procedures and Policies included in the annexed document:

- Equality, Diversity, and Student Support Policy
- Enquiry and Appeals Policy
- Maladministration and Malpractice Policy
- Academic Misconduct Policy
- Student Admission Policy
- Assessment Policy

Defining the policies and procedures that govern the processes addressing the relevant issues will ensure transparency and clarity amongst faculty and students. They will also ensure an orderly procedure, adequate privacy and a timely resolution of issues.

Institutional Probity

ACADEMIC, ADMINISTRATIVE AND PROFESSIONAL INTEGRITY

Ultrasound Academy is committed to:

- produce educational material respecting copyright, intellectual property and privacy laws
- implement IQA processes that encourage continuous improvement in academic programs and processes
- ensure professional conduct among faculty, staff and students
- discourage plagiarism through student education, use of plagiarism recognition software and policies governing academic misconduct.
- ensure fair, transparent and timely disciplinary procedures for academic and non academic malpractice and misconduct
- ensure equal opportunities for staff and faculty by implementing policies preventing discrimination and promoting inclusion.

FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY

Ultrasound Academy is a limited liability company (registration number C 99559). It has yearly audited accounts, adheres to Tax laws and commits to submit FSS and income tax forms in a timely manner.

STUDENT SUPPORT

For any administrative or logistical questions or issues students may contact the administrator on info@ultrasoundacademy.org

For any IT or technical questions or issues, students may contact the web administrator on info@ultrasoundacademy.org

The primary reference for any educational issues or questions is the student's mentor. Apart from having specific time dedicated for this at the mentor-mentee in-person encounters, the student's will be able to contact their mentor via the VLP at anytime. The mentor will also be the student's reference point for any other issues.

Student's may also schedule an in-person meeting with the mentor or Director via the administrator.

ASSESSMENTS

All information regarding assessments may be found in the annexed document – Ultrasound Academy Assessment Policy

Formative Assessments

During the mentor-mentee encounters, a formative assessment for each modality is performed against a rubric which is available to students on the VLP. This serves to guide both student and mentor to adjust and optimise specific facets of the scan technique.

Practical Documentation

A logbook documenting the practical experience of the candidate must be compiled during the in-person training days and in clinical practice. The number of mentored and non-mentored scans for a specific clinical application will be specified in the logbook.

Summative Assessment

Case Study and Literature Review

Write up of one clinical case accompanied by a literature review. This shall be assessed according to a marking scheme, available to students on the VLP resources. The case studies and literature reviews will contribute 18% of the final mark.

Final Assessment

This will be composed of 3 parts and will occur in **person at the training centre**:

1. Skill assessment in the form of **Observed Structured Clinical Examinations** or OSCEs. Each modality will be assessed using an OSCE in which the components of the examination are individually assessed on a marking sheet or rubric. Assessments will involve external examiners to ensure good governance. All obligatory components of the scan must be achieved in order to pass the OSCE. Successful completion of the course requires a pass in the OSCEs of **all** modalities.

Should a student fail one or more OSCEs, they are allowed a re-test on the same day by a different assessor. A repeat fail in any of the OSCEs will require the student to undergo a period of remedial training and eventual re-assessment of that modality.

2. **MCQs** to test didactic knowledge. The didactic knowledge and pattern recognition will be assessed using 15 - 25 MCQs per modality. There will be a total of 100 MCQs and a pass requires the candidate to answer a minimum of 50% correctly.

3. **Clinical Cases with Short answer questions** to test clinical integration and recognition of pathology. There will be a total of 15 - 20 clinical cases with SAQs encompassing all modalities. A pass requires the candidate to answer a minimum of 50% correctly.

Students who fail any of the written components will be given feedback by their mentor and must re-sit that component at an eventual sitting.

Final Mark Allocation and Grades

Mark Allocation:

Literature reviews – 18%

MCQ – 40%

Cases with Short answer questions – 42%

A pass in all the practical OSCEs is obligatory to pass the course.

Overall Grading:

Fail <50%

Pass 50-60%

Pass with Merit 60-70%

Pass with Distinction >70%

QUALITY ASSURANCE - APPEALS, COMPLAINTS & MISCONDUCT

The Assessment policy, Enquiry & Appeals Policy and Academic Misconduct policy are available in the Procedures and Policies document.

Students and faculty will receive information regarding academic integrity, emphasizing the importance of ethical conduct and the consequences of academic misconduct as indicated in the policy. All policies will be available on the VLP. In addition, students will be advised regarding correct citation practices to minimise the chance of suspicious scores on the plagiarism software and accidental cases of misconduct.

To provide clarity and ensure that students are aware of the marking parameters for assessment, the rubrics for the literature reviews, written exams and OSCE examinations are published in advance and communicated to the students. Prior to the summative examinations, a faculty meeting is convened to ensure that all examiners are familiar with the assessment criteria/rubric to ensure a uniform assessment amongst candidates. In the case of failures, feedback will be provided in-person to the student by their mentor. Together they will formulate an educational plan to map out the way forward and improve the chances of success at the next sitting.

The students will be informed about the enquiry and appeals policy should they have any questions regarding their assessment.

Student Admission, Progression, Recognition and Certification

The Ultrasound Academy Admission policy is available in the Procedures and Policies document.

Candidates must be qualified healthcare workers in good standing. English proficiency is necessary. A copy of the Medical Degree and the registration with the Malta Medical Council will be required. For foreign medical degrees, an MQRIC recognition statement will be additionally required.

ADMISSION

Admission requests will be processed online through the website in a transparent manner. Applicants must submit the online application form together with any necessary documentation. These are reviewed and vetted by the administrator. Students will be accepted on a first come, first served basis and will be informed via the contact details provided on the system. On payment of the registration fee, their place on the course is confirmed. Once all available places for a specific course are filled, no further registrations will be accepted by the online system.

Once a student is accepted for a particular course an account on the VLE is created via the API and student is sent the login details where he will be prompted to change the password. Since the account is created automatically via API, based on the details submitted in the application, the student will only have access to data that concern his/her course. An email address is used as a unique identifier.

Induction to the programme and support will be provided after admission. This will include orientation to the online platform via instructional videos and step-by-step guides. Information regarding course structure, adherence to data protection laws, academic integrity, discrimination, aggression and harassment policies, student complaints and appeal procedures will all be available on the VLP and discussed with the students at the first in-person encounter. Student data and progression status will be stored, in accordance with GDPR regulations.

PROGRESS

Different aspects of a student's progress are visible on the VLP. The progress in the online lectures will be visible on a timeline allowing the relevant faculty to ensure that all lectures are covered before the practical sessions.

Scanning experience is evaluated at the mentor-mentee meetings by review of the logbook and the positive case reports. At these meetings, scanning technique is also reviewed at the formative assessments and any necessary adjustments to techniques are advised. Mentors will submit a report on the VLP after each meeting.

The literature reviews are submitted online and corrected against a rubric by the mentor.

COMPLETION

On successful completion of the programme, a certificate will be provided together with supplemental information about course content, Malta Qualification Framework (MQF) level and number of credits, status of qualification gained and learning outcomes.

Learning Resources and Student Support

Ultrasound Academy will provide adequate learning resources to enhance student-centred learning and a positive learning experience at the Academy. Students will be informed about these resources on being accepted for the course. Resources provided for students and staff include:

Online Lectures

Lecture series for each module will be available to all students and faculty. They are produced by the Academy to ensure that they specifically cover the topics that are essential to the learning outcomes. They comply with educational design principles, are engaging and mitigate the cognitive load by being split into 5-8 minute segments. Each segment is followed by a number of MCQs to ensure that the student has understood the material.

Online Step by Step Scan Techniques

The scanning protocols and techniques will be available on the VLP. For students these will serve as an introduction to the practical sessions and as a reference, during their workplace practice, to reinforce the correct technique. For the faculty, having a reference, Academy approved protocol/technique will ensure consistency in the teaching approach amongst all the instructors.

Coursebook

Each course covers specific modalities and topics for a particular specialty. To spare students having to go through multiple reference books or select a course book that isn't specific to the needs of a particular specialty, the Academy will issue its own coursebook which will contain the core material necessary for the course. In addition, it will provide expanded sections for more in-depth knowledge as well as other titles for reference.

Virtual Learning Platform

Funding has been allocated for the development of a user-friendly web platform and the creation of high-quality online lectures together with a virtual library of case studies. Our experience with other Learning Management Systems has encouraged us to invest in the development of a custom made portal that allows a user friendly interface for both students and mentors and can serve as a single reference point for resources, communication and submission of assessments/logbooks.

Virtual Case and Image library

Students and faculty can access a virtual library on the VLP, where they can view relevant case studies as well as ultrasound images and clips for different pathologies covered in the course.

Online webinars

Guest experts and Academy faculty will lead case-based webinars to stimulate discussion about recognition of different pathologies and the integration of ultrasound findings into the clinical management.

Physical Reference Library (for Faculty)

A physical library of reference books is available for faculty to research specific modalities of POCUS including specialty areas of the subject.

Ultrasound Machines

During the training sessions, students will be scanning using actual machines on real models improving the real-life value of the experience and moving away from simulated equipment.

Handheld Ultrasound Machines

The Academy will be investing in a number of handheld ultrasound units which will be loaned to the students. These will be taken to their workplace (if there are no machines available) to scan on their particular patient population which are more likely to have pathologies that are of interest to their specialty.

Mentor Support

Students will be assigned a member of senior faculty as a mentor to accompany them in their educational journey throughout the course. They will be introduced at the first training day and will subsequently meet at mentor-mentee encounters where they will have one-to-one practice and support. The mentor will be a key reference point available both in person and online for any clinical question or administrative issues that the student may have.

Administrative Support

Any logistical or administrative issues and questions may be addressed by both students and faculty to the administrator via email admin@ultrasoundacademy.org. These will be forwarded or discussed with the relevant individual or group.

IT Support

Any IT or technical issues may be addressed by both students and faculty to info@ultrasoundacademy.org

Information Management

Ultrasound Academy will collect student information via the Web based database. Data stored will include student details and records, student population, student satisfaction rates, progression and course participation. This will be compliant with GDPR regulations.

Data is stored on a remote server that operates using Cloud technology. this provides the flexibility to increase server disk size, drop servers and replace them with bigger ones while retaining the same disks and IP Address. Storage is infinite and geo-replicated, files stored will be either private or public.

All server disks and backups are encrypted at the infrastructure level. The server will be backed up daily, the backup will be stored in a private cloud storage container which is geo-replicated, backups are kept for 7 days. Daily snapshots of the servers disk will be taken and geo-replicated, in the event of a whole data centre going down for long periods of time we would be prepared to use the latest snapshot to build another server in another region, then switch dns records accordingly.

All collected information is systematically organized within a secure relational database, serving multiple purposes. This includes monitoring student progress throughout a course, compiling data for report generation, and analyzing pass/fail rates of both students and instructors. The application is designed to facilitate the programming of new reports and reporting interfaces as needed.

Apart from data collected from within the VLP, other data which will be incorporated will include faculty self-assessment forms and the follow up survey of graduates and external stakeholders. All data is stored on the Cloud and can be accessed as required via an internet connection.

The database includes student profiles in the various courses, encompassing personal information and course progress, and is accessible to both instructors and administrators. Student profiles are gathered as a student progresses through the various components of the course including completion of online lectures, submission of literature reviews and outcome of mentor/mentee encounters as well as all formative/summative assessments. Subsequently the information contributes to the overall participation, retention and success rate analyses. The raw data is adaptable and can be presented in diverse formats based on specific requirements. All data will be indefinitely stored in the cloud until actively removed by automated procedures or manually. This data includes but is not limited to databases, files, documents and other media. Any unnecessary or unlawful data will be removed from the cloud by automated procedures once the specific date has elapsed. Manual deletion of data is also possible. When a file is removed from cloud storage, all the replicas will eventually be removed.

Public Information

Ultrasound Academy will publish all information about current programmes on their website: www.ultrasoundacademy.org. This website was professionally designed to be easily accessed from different types of devices. The information shall include:

- Selection criteria for the courses/ programmes
- Learning outcomes
- Qualifications awarded, including EQF/MQF level and ECTS/ECVET learning credits
- Teaching, learning and assessment procedures used
- Pass rates
- Further learning opportunities
- Professional impact or enhancement as a result of the course

Any alteration or addition to the courses offered will be discussed and confirmed at the yearly educational committee meetings. These proposals will then be finalised at the subsequent IQA meeting. The Director is responsible to communicate any changes to the Administrator who will liaise with the web designer to implement them in the website.

The graduate feedback form will include a section on the validity and usefulness of the information available on the website.

Ultrasound Academy Policy and Procedures

ULTRASOUND ACADEMY LTD. COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Introduction

Ultrasound Academy is committed to providing a positive and supportive learning environment for all its students. The aim of this policy is to provide a consistent, open approach to addressing complaints. The aim is to facilitate conciliation and timely resolution.

Purpose

The purpose of this Complaints Procedure is to provide a mechanism for students to express their concerns, complaints, or grievances and to ensure that these concerns are handled in a fair, consistent, and timely manner.

Scope

This procedure applies to all students enrolled at the Ultrasound Academy, encompassing academic matters, administrative issues, and interpersonal conflicts.

Definitions

- Concern: An expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought
- Complaint: An expression of dissatisfaction or concern by a student regarding a specific aspect of their experience at Ultrasound Academy
- Complainant: The student making the complaint
- Respondent: The person or entity against whom the complaint is made

A complaint refers to any formal written expression of dissatisfaction with the academy, services, equipment or staff, made by the student or third-party associates.

Procedure

1. Informal Resolution

1.1 If a student has a concern or complaint, they are encouraged to first attempt an informal resolution by discussing the issue with the relevant staff member, instructor, or administrator involved.

1.2 The aim of the informal resolution is to resolve the matter promptly and amicably.

2. Formal Complaint Process

2.1 If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of the informal resolution or if the issue remains unresolved, they may proceed to file a formal complaint.

2.2 The complainant must submit a written complaint to the administrator within 10 days

2.3 The written complaint should include:

- name, address and telephone number of the person raising the complaint
- a clear description of the complaint
- copies of any relevant correspondence
- Relevant dates, times, and locations.
- Details of any attempts at informal resolution

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

2.4 Formal complaints will be dealt with in accordance with relevant Ultrasound Academy procedures.

- When the complaint relates dissatisfaction with the process of assessment marking, the **Enquiries and Appeals Policy** should be followed.
- When the complaint relates to alleged malpractice or maladministration, the **Malpractice and Maladministration Policy** should be followed.

Formal complaints may also include:

- Discharge of responsibility by Ultrasound Academy staff
- Behaviour of students on site, in residential buildings or outside of the school environment
- Finance, the provision of commercial services
- Policy issues, where the substance of complaint regards a policy decision made by a corporation or external organisation
- Dissatisfaction with a member of staff (academic or support)
- Dissatisfaction with a student

2.5 The designated complaints officer will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 5 days and initiate an investigation.

3. Investigation

3.1 The complaints officer will forward the complaint to the Head of School who will conduct a thorough and impartial investigation, which may involve interviews with relevant parties and a review of relevant documentation.

3.2 The investigation will be completed within 30 days.

4. Outcome:

4.1 The administrator will communicate the outcome of the investigation to the complainant in writing.

4.2 If the complaint is upheld, the Academy will take appropriate remedial action, which may involve changes to policies, procedures, or specific actions to address the issue, including any necessary disciplinary action or sanctions against the Academy's staff or associates.

4.3 The complainant will be informed in writing of the decision, reassured that action is being taken and informed about the outcome of such action. UA is not obliged to divulge the details of disciplinary action or sanctions against staff members. The complainant will not be entitled to participate in internal discussions, and the details of the proceedings will be documented but remain confidential.

4.4 If the complaint is not upheld, the matter will be officially closed. The Academy may wish to return to a process of informal discussion regarding any outstanding issues

5. Appeals

5.1 If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome, they may appeal within 10 days.

5.2 The appeal should be submitted in writing, clearly outlining the reasons for the appeal.

5.3 An appeals panel, independent of the initial investigation, will review the appeal and provide a final decision.

6. Support:

Support is provided to students who have complaints lodged against them as well as students who seek to lodge a formal written complaint.

The Quality Assurance panel holds an annual review of complaints and their resolutions to inform views of the service. Policy is reviewed every two years, and use of personal data is used efficiently and effectively to deliver better, accurate and necessary services.

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY, AND STUDENT SUPPORT POLICY

Introduction

The Ultrasound Academy is committed to fostering an inclusive, diverse, and supportive learning environment where all students, regardless of their background, can thrive academically and personally. This Equality, Diversity, and Student Support Policy outlines the Academy's commitment to promoting equality, embracing diversity, and providing comprehensive support to ensure the well-being and success of every student.

Scope

This policy statement describes how it will adhere to the diversity, equality and non-discrimination legislation and ensure equal opportunities in terms of access to its qualifications, assessment and services. The Institute is committed to equal opportunities both as an employer, when carrying out all of its regulated functions and in the wider context of education and training.

1. Equality and Diversity:

1.1 Equal Opportunities:

Ultrasound Academy is committed to provide equal opportunities for all students, irrespective of their age, disability, gender, gender identity, race, religion, sexual orientation, or socioeconomic status.

1.2 Anti-discrimination:

Discrimination of any form is strictly prohibited within the Academy. This includes direct and indirect discrimination, harassment, and victimization.

1.3 Inclusive Practices:

The Academy will strive to create an inclusive curriculum and learning environment that reflects the diversity of our student body and promotes understanding and respect for different perspectives.

1.4 Reasonable Adjustments:

Reasonable adjustments will be made to accommodate the needs of students with disabilities or specific learning requirements, ensuring equal access to education and facilities.

2. Student Support Services:

2.1 Academic Support:

The Academy will provide academic support services to assist students in reaching their full potential. This may include tutoring, study resources, and additional assistance for students facing academic challenges.

2.3 Accessibility:

Physical and digital accessibility will be prioritized to ensure that all students can fully participate in the learning experience. Facilities, materials, and online platforms will be designed with accessibility in mind.

2.4 Personal Development:

The Academy is committed to fostering the personal and professional development of students by providing opportunities for leadership and skill development beyond the academic curriculum for selected candidates.

3. Reporting Mechanisms:

3.1 Incident Reporting:

The Academy encourages students to report any incidents of discrimination, harassment, or any concerns related to equality and diversity.

3.2 Confidentiality:

All reports will be treated confidentially, and the privacy of individuals involved will be respected to the extent possible.

3.3 Non-Retaliation:

The Academy prohibits retaliation against any individual who reports an incident or participates in an investigation related to equality and diversity.

4. Training and Awareness:

4.1 Staff Training:

Academy staff will receive advice on equality, diversity, and inclusion to ensure that they are equipped to create an inclusive and supportive learning environment.

4.2 Student Awareness:

If necessary, the Academy will conduct awareness campaigns to educate students about equality, diversity, and the importance of creating an inclusive community.

5. Review and Continuous Improvement:

5.1 Regular Review:

This policy will be reviewed periodically to assess its effectiveness and relevance. Feedback from students and staff will be considered in the review process.

5.2 Continuous Improvement:

The Academy is committed to continuous improvement in its practices related to equality, diversity, and student support.

Legislation

Ultrasound academy will refer to the following legislation and relevant equality information:

a) Human rights Chapter 319 Malta Legislation

b) Chapter 413 Equal Opportunities of the Laws of Malta including persons with disability

c) Education

- Article 8 of the Equality between Men and Women Act CAP 456
- Teachers (Code of Ethics and Practice) Regulations S.L. 327.02
- Framework for the Education Strategy for Malta 2014-2024
- Addressing Bullying Behaviour in Schools
- Trans, Gender Variant and Intersex Students in School Policy
- Policy on Inclusive Education in Schools: Route to Quality Inclusion - A National Inclusive Education Framework

d) Fundamental Rights and Freedoms of individuals Chapter IV, Article 32 Sexual orientation & Gender Identity ACT No. X of 2014, ACT XI of 2015

e) Employment of Sexual orientation & Gender Identity;

- Article 45 Act No. X of 2014 o Medical
- Subsidiary Legislation 452.114 of 2017 o Equality for Men and Women Act
 - I. Subsidiary legislation 452.89 Employment and Industrial Relations Interpretation Order implemented through L.N. 297 of 2003
 - II. Subsidiary Legislation 452.95 Equal Treatment in Employment Regulations implemented through L.N. 461 Of 2004 and L.N. 274 of 2014
 - III. Subsidiary legislation 460.16 Equal Treatment in Self-Employment and Occupation Order implemented through L.N. 86 of 2007
 - IV. Subsidiary Legislation 452.100 Extension of Applicability to Service with Government (Equal Treatment in Employment) Regulations implemented through L.N. 524 Of 2007 V. Equality for Men and Women Act (CAP 456) of 2003 as amended through ACT No. IX of 2012 and ACT No. XI of 2015 which introduced the grounds of sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics as protected grounds.

f) Healthcare

- Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Gender Expression Act LV of 2016, LN 44 of 2018 o Transgender Healthcare
- The Gender Wellbeing Clinic
- Referrals to the Gender Wellbeing Clinic
- The Mental Health Act CAP 525

g) National Commission for the Promotion of Equality o Act I of 2003 o Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity through Act IX of 2012 o Gender Expression and Sex Characteristics through Act XI of 2015.

Contact Information

For any inquiries or concerns related to equality, diversity, and student support, please contact the administrator on info@ultrasoundacademy.org and these will be referred accordingly.

ENQUIRY AND APPEALS POLICY

Introduction

The Ultrasound Academy is committed to maintaining the integrity and fairness of its assessment processes. The outcomes of the Ultrasound Academy assessment decisions are based on impartial, reliable, fair and valid judgements and aim to ensure that the decisions affecting learners are processed according to stated standards. Nevertheless, there may be occasions when the Academy's decision is questioned.

This Assessments Enquiry and Appeals Policy outlines the procedures for students to seek clarification, raise concerns, or appeal assessment-related decisions made by the Academy.

1. General Principles:

1.1 Right to Enquire:

Students have the right to make inquiries regarding any aspect of their assessment, including grading, feedback, and other relevant matters. An enquiry can be made when a learner contests the assessment marking and can prove that this has not met the standard.

1.2 Right to Appeal:

Students have the right to appeal decisions made regarding their enquiry which they consider unfair, inconsistent, or incorrect.

2. Assessment Enquiries:

2.1 Formal Enquiries:

Students may submit a formal written enquiry to the Administrator via info@ultrasoundacademy.org within 10 days of receipt of the result. The administrator will contact the relevant assessor to address the enquiry if the conditions below have been met.

2.2 Enquiry Process

- the enquiry is submitted in writing to the Academy's administrator within 10 working days of receipt of the assessment result
- the enquiry should include the grounds for the contestation and any supporting documentation
- the Academy does not accept enquiries from other learners, family members or other third parties on behalf of the candidate.

The assessor will review their marking after evaluating the grounds for contestation and communicate their decision in writing to the Academy.

2.3 Outcome of Enquiry:

The outcome of the assessment enquiry will be communicated to the student in writing within 10 working days from the conclusion of the process.

3. Assessment Appeals:

3.1 Grounds for Appeal:

Students may appeal the conclusions of the enquiry. An Appeal, which can be made by a learner against the Academy's decision regarding his/her enquiry, is dealt with by the Institute Director. Appeals must be based on reasonable grounds, such as procedural errors or new evidence.

3.2 Appeals Procedure:

Students must submit a written appeal to the Academy Director on info@ultrasoundacademy.org within 10 days of the enquiry outcome. The appeal should clearly state the grounds for appeal and include any supporting documentation.

The Academy director shall appoint a committee to review the appeal and communicate an outcome within 10 working days from receipt. The Appeals committee will have the final decision.

3.3 Appeals Committee:

An assessment appeals committee, independent of the initial assessment decision, will be formed to review the appeal. The committee will include 2 reviewers not involved in the original decision.

3.4 Appeals Hearing:

In some cases, an appeals hearing may be conducted to allow the student to present their case in person. The student may bring a representative for support.

3.5 Outcome of Appeals:

The assessment appeals committee will communicate its decision to the student in writing within 5 days of the conclusion.

4. Confidentiality:

4.1 Confidentiality:

All parties involved in the assessment enquiry and appeals process are expected to maintain confidentiality to the extent possible, respecting the privacy and rights of everyone involved.

5. Continuous Review and Revision:

5.1 Regular Review:

This Assessments Enquiry and Appeals Policy will be reviewed periodically to ensure its effectiveness and relevance.

5.2 Continuous Improvement:

The Academy is committed to continuous improvement in its procedures for handling assessment enquiries and appeals.

Contact Information

For any assessment enquiries or to initiate an appeal, please contact info@ultrasoundacademy.org

MALADMINISTRATION AND MALPRACTICE POLICY

Introduction

Suspicion of malpractice or maladministration may arise from a variety of sources as stated below. The policy sets out the principles governing the process by which Ultrasound Academy will deal with such cases and the steps which must be followed when reporting suspected or actual cases of malpractice and maladministration.

1. Definitions:

1.1 Definition of Malpractice

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

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

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

Staff Malpractice

Examples of Staff malpractice:

- Repeated short-notice cancellation of external verifier
- Continued failure to meet the Academy requirements regarding assessment and internal verification
- Fabricating or changing judgements for internally assessed work, without following agreed internal policies and processes
- Repeated incidences of insufficient evidence of the learners' achievements to justify the marks given or assessment decisions made
- Inadequate adherence to students specific learning needs
- Insufficient implementation of the institutions professional code of conduct

Learner Malpractice

Examples of Learner malpractice:

- Cheating including:
 - o Communicating with or copying the work of another learner during an examination.
 - o Introducing written or printed material into an examination room, when prohibited
 - o Possession of any materials not permitted in the room, such as electronic devices including mobile phones, personal organisers, books, dictionaries or calculators
- Collusion: When a learner submits work as their own, when it was completed in collaboration with another person. It also applies to a learner that permits another learner to copy all or part of their work and submits it as an original piece of work.
- Fabrication: Involves the invention or falsification of data, information, or sources in academic assignments, research, or assessments.

- Ghosting: This occurs when a learner submits work as their own although it has been produced in whole or part by another person on their behalf or has been bought from the internet
 - Plagiarism: The presentation of another's work (in whole or in part) as their own.
- Kindly refer to The Academic Misconduct Policy for further details regarding management of learner malpractice.

1.2 Definition of Maladministration

For the purposes of this policy, this is defined as:

'Any activity, neglect, default or other practice that result in the Academy not complying with the set requirements for delivery and assessment of qualifications.'

Examples of maladministration:

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

2. Process:

2.1. Allegations should be made in writing to admin@ultrasoundacademy.org and should include:

- Full name and student or faculty ID number
- Details of affected qualification or service
- Nature of the suspected malpractice or maladministration
- Details of any previous mitigation, if occurred
- Name and role of persons involved in the allegation

2.2. Upon receipt of the allegation in writing, the Academy Director will appoint an investigative committee composed of 2 members of faculty unconnected with the case. These will investigate, determine the veracity and take appropriate measures, as per the Academy's procedures and employment regulations. In all cases, until an investigation is complete, and the allegation or suspicion proven, UA shall use the terms 'alleged malpractice or maladministration' or 'suspected malpractice or maladministration', in relation to the case.

2.3. Where the malpractice or maladministration appears to involve a criminal offence, the institute shall report the case to the police. At all times the Director will ensure that the personnel assigned to the investigation have the appropriate level of training and competence and have no previous involvement or personal interest in the matter.

2.4. During an investigation involving staff, the employee(s) may be suspended or moved to other duties until the investigation is complete.

2.5. If the investigation confirms malpractice or maladministration, the Institute shall take any actions necessary to:

- safeguard the integrity, validity or reliability of any assessment process and/or the validity of any certificates
- protect the interests of learners and their needs

- to maintain public confidence in the institute
- to maintain the institute's status as an awarding organization

2.6. Following the investigation, the Academy may introduce amendments as appropriate concerning;

- employee training and development
- delivery of the modules
- awarding arrangements
- assessment and/or monitoring arrangements
- internal operational procedures
- staff recruitment and training to prevent similar issues recurring

2.7. An annual register of malpractice and maladministration cases will be kept, which will also include cases that were proven to be unfounded. This will help ensure that procedures are applied properly and fairly. The policy will be constantly reviewed to ensure that procedures are consistent with the Academy's accreditation requirements.

3. Appeals against Sanctions:

3.1 Process

Staff or learners wishing to appeal the decision must do so in writing to the Academy Director. The appeal must be lodged within 5 working days of the notification of the outcome and sanctions.

The appeal should include:

- the reason/s for the disagreement with the conclusion of the investigation
- any further information to support the appeal

3.2 The Academy Director shall review the original decision. If the matter has been fully addressed and there is no further information the appeal will be closed. If the initial response did not evaluate the additional information presented, the appeal will be reviewed by another committee appointed by the Director. This will include the Director (unless they are involved in the case), and another 2 faculty members not connected with the case and who did not form part of the original committee. The conclusion of the appeals committee will be final.

3.3 The conclusion of the appeal will be communicated in writing to the appellant within 10 days from the decision.

Contact Information

For any enquiries please contact info@ultrasoundacademy.org

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT POLICY

Introduction

The Ultrasound Academy is dedicated to maintaining the highest standards of academic integrity and ethical conduct among its students. This Academic Misconduct Policy outlines the expectations, definitions, and consequences related to academic misconduct and provides a framework for maintaining a fair and honest learning environment.

1. Definitions of Academic Misconduct:

1.1 Cheating:

Cheating includes, but is not limited to, using unauthorized materials during exams, copying from others, or obtaining and sharing answers during assessments.

1.2 Plagiarism:

Plagiarism is the presentation of another person's work, ideas, or intellectual property as one's own without proper acknowledgment. This includes copying from sources without proper citation and submitting someone else's work as one's own.

Plagiarism will be dealt with specifically in Section 7.

1.3 Collusion:

Collusion is the unauthorized collaboration between students on assignments, projects, or assessments when individual work is required.

Collusion will be dealt with specifically in Section 8.

1.4 Fabrication:

Fabrication involves the invention or falsification of data, information, or sources in academic assignments, research, or assessments.

1.5 Unauthorized Assistance:

Seeking or providing unauthorized assistance during exams, quizzes, or other assessments.

2. Reporting and Detection:

2.1 Faculty Responsibility:

Faculty members are responsible for detecting and reporting instances of academic misconduct. This may include using plagiarism detection software, monitoring exams, and being vigilant in assessing the originality and authenticity of student work.

2.2 Student Responsibility:

Students are obliged to familiarize themselves with the malpractice policy and citation guidance of the Academy. They are also obliged to report any suspected academic misconduct they become aware of to the relevant faculty member.

3. Consequences of Academic Misconduct:

3.1 Faculty Actions:

Upon discovering academic misconduct, the administration and faculty have the discretion to take appropriate action which may include issuing a warning, assigning a reduced grade, or requiring the submission of a new assignment.

3.2 Formal Investigation:

In cases of serious or repeated academic misconduct, the Academy may initiate a formal investigation. This investigation may involve collecting evidence, interviewing relevant parties, and determining the appropriate sanctions.

3.3 Possible Sanctions:

Sanctions for academic misconduct may be imposed, depending on the nature and gravity of the malpractice.

1. Written warning
2. Repeating the assessment
3. Repeating the module
4. Expulsion from the course
5. Withdrawal of the qualification
6. A combination of the above

3.4 Records:

A full record of the case will be kept in accordance with data protection and information management policies including:

- Details of the facts
- Names of all people involved in the case and their roles
- Copies of all written statements
- Details of the investigation
- Records of hearing, if occurred
- Copy of the work which is subject to the allegation
- Record of the decision taken
- Record of confirmed penalty

4. Academic Integrity Education:

4.1 Prevention Programs:

The Academy is committed to proactive measures to prevent academic misconduct, including advice and resources about academic integrity and guidelines regarding proper citation practices.

4.2 Orientation:

Students will receive information on academic integrity during orientation, emphasizing the importance of ethical conduct and the consequences of academic misconduct.

5. Appeals Process:

5.1 Appealing Decisions:

Students have the right to appeal decisions related to academic misconduct. Appeals must be submitted in writing to info@ultrasoundacademy.org, clearly stating the grounds for appeal, within 5 days of the receipt of the decision.

5.2 Appeals Committee:

An appeals committee, independent of the initial decision, will review the appeal and provide a final decision.

6. Continuous Review and Revision:

6.1 Regular Review:

This Academic Misconduct Policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure its effectiveness and relevance to the evolving academic environment.

6.2 Continuous Improvement:

The Academy is committed to continuous improvement in preventing and addressing academic misconduct.

7. Plagiarism:

7.1 Plagiarism is defined as “the unacknowledged use, as one's own, of the work of another person, whether or not such work has been published”. The Academy is committed to ensuring that students are given advice and guidance to avoid accidental plagiarism, although ultimately the student is responsible for his or her actions.

7.2 The Academy assumes that the work submitted is the student's own work, except where it is acknowledged through the proper use of quotation, citation, and reference.

7.3 These guidelines are intended primarily for the literature review submitted for assessment. The students are instructed to submit electronic copies of their assignment via the VLE.

7.4 Major plagiarism includes:

- Copying of text, diagrams, tables, images or other material from any published or unpublished material
- Patchwriting – only changing some words, order of the words, or redrawing diagrams, with or without citation

7.5 Minor Plagiarism includes:

- Absent, inconsistent or incomplete in-line citation
- Incorrectly written Reference list
- Failure to compile a reference section
- Individual in-line citations lack corresponding entries in the reference section
- Inconsistent citation style

7.6 The main referencing style adopted by the Academy is the Harvard Referencing style.

7.7 Detecting Plagiarism

7.7.1 Faculty will make use of anti-plagiarism software and are provided with an originality report indicating the degree of overlap with other specified sources providing an indication of the likelihood of plagiarism. A score up to 20% would be considered acceptable although analysis of the originality report should be performed prior to punitive action.

7.7.2 Characteristics that may indicate that the student has engaged in plagiarism include:

- Absence of a reference section
- Inability to match references in reference list to the corresponding in-text references
- Inconsistent referencing style (Harvard style)
- Absence of in-line citations
- Incomplete reference list – some in-text references are not listed in the reference list
- Presence of unsubstantiated claims
- Irrelevant claims
- Inconsistent writing style

7.8 Reporting

7.8.1 A report should be compiled by the faculty member who suspects an assignment to be plagiarised. This should identify the part/s that have been plagiarised and the probable source/s. If anti-plagiarism software was used, the originality report should be attached to the report, once verified.

7.8.2 This report is sent to the Academy Director

7.9 Consequences of Plagiarism

Kindly refer to Sections 3-5 of this document

8. Collusion:

8.1 Collusion is defined as unauthorized collaboration between two or more students to produce work.

8.2 In supervised exams and assignments, students are expected to work individually, with no sharing of ideas or material.

8.3 Examples of collusion include:

- Borrowing an assignment written by another student and basing the assignment on the borrowed one
- Sharing scans performed by others and incorporating them into their own work
- Collaborating on an assignment intended to be performed as an individual – such that the student works on part of an assignment but submits the work performed by all.

8.4 It is acceptable for students to discuss problems with assignments verbally among fellow students to suggest sources of information, and for a proof-reader to correct grammatical errors in a written work.

8.5 Reporting

8.5.1 A report should be compiled by the faculty member who suspects collusion. This should identify the contain any evidence of collusion.

8.5.2 This report is sent to the Academy Director

8.6 Consequences of Collusion

Kindly refer to Sections 3-5 of this document

Contact Information

For any inquiries or concerns related to academic misconduct, please contact the administrator on info@ultrasoundacademy.org and this shall be passed on to the relevant person or group.

STUDENT ADMISSION POLICY

Introduction

Ultrasound Academy is committed to providing high-quality education and training in the field of point-of-care ultrasound. This Student Admission Policy outlines the principles and procedures governing the admission of students to Ultrasound Academy courses and programs.

1. Eligibility:

1.1 Program-Specific Requirements:

Prospective students must be qualified doctors in good standing with the medical council and be in the specialty or training post specified in the particular ultrasound program being applied for.

1.2 Educational Background:

Applicants are required to possess a medical undergraduate degree.

2. Application Process:

2.1 Submission of Application:

Applicants must complete and submit the official online application form along with all required documents.

2.2 Application Deadlines:

The Academy will establish application deadlines for each intake. Late applications may be considered on a case-by-case basis.

2.3 Application Fee:

A non-refundable application fee is required for processing applications. The amount and payment details will be specified in the course information.

2.4 Selection Process:

If an applicant fulfils the requested criteria and all necessary documentation has been submitted and vetted, the student will be accepted on a first come, first served basis until all available places are taken.

2.5 Acceptance and Enrolment:

Accepted students must confirm their acceptance by the specified deadline and complete the enrolment process, including payment of tuition fees and submission of required documentation. The student agreement needs to be signed prior to the start of the relevant course.

2.6 Deferral and Withdrawal:

Requests for deferral or withdrawal of admission will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

3. Equal Opportunity and Non-discrimination:

3.1 Equal Opportunity:

The Ultrasound Academy is committed to providing equal opportunities for all applicants, irrespective of age, disability, gender, gender identity, race, religion, sexual orientation, or socioeconomic status.

3.2 Non-discrimination:

The Academy prohibits discrimination in the admission process based on any protected characteristic.

4. Review and Revision:

4.1 Regular Review:

This Student Admission Policy will be reviewed periodically to ensure its effectiveness and relevance.

4.2 Continuous Improvement:

The Academy is committed to continuous improvement in its admissions processes.

Contact Information

For any inquiries or concerns related to student admission, please contact the administrator on info@ultrasoundacademy.org

ASSESSMENT POLICY

Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to outline the principles and procedures for the assessment of students enrolled at Ultrasound Academy. This policy ensures the fair, transparent, and consistent assessment of students' knowledge, skills, and competencies in ultrasound technology.

1. Types of Assessment:

1.1 Formative assessments

This is used for ongoing feedback during the learning process and helps identify areas for improvement. This includes the review of the logbook and practice evaluation during in-person mentor/mentee meetings

1.2 Summative Assessments

This is used to evaluate the students' overall performance at the end of module or course.

This will include review of Logbook completion and in-person final assessment.

- Logbook is compiled at the in-person training days and in clinical practice: Minimum quota of 300 cases including 60 positive cases. The positive cases must include a brief case report and a formal Ultrasound report.
- Write up of 6 clinical cases (one per modality), each with a 2000-word literature review. This shall be assessed according to a marking scheme which will be available to students on the VLE resources. The case studies and literature reviews will each contribute 3% of the final mark (i.e. 18% of the total).
- Final Assessment includes 3 components and will occur in-person at the training centre:
 - o Skill assessment in the form of Observed Structured Clinical Examinations or OSCEs. Each modality will be assessed using an OSCE in which the components of the examination are individually assessed on a marking sheet. Assessments will involve external examiners to ensure good governance. Obligatory components of the scan must all be achieved in order to pass the OSCE. Successful completion of the course requires a pass in the OSCE of all 6 modalities.
Should a student fail one or more OSCEs, they are allowed a re-test on the same day by a different assessor. A repeat fail in any of the OSCEs will require the student to undergo a period of remedial training and eventual re-assessment of that modality.
 - o MCQs to test didactic knowledge. The didactic knowledge and pattern recognition will be assessed using 15 - 25 MCQs per modality. There will be a total of 120 MCQs and a pass requires the candidate to answer a minimum of 50% correctly.
 - o Clinical Cases with Short answer questions to test clinical integration and recognition of pathology. There will be a total of 28 clinical cases with SAQs encompassing all modalities. A pass requires the candidate to answer a minimum of 50% correctly.

Students who fail any of above written components will be given feedback by their mentor and must re-sit that component at an eventual sitting.

2. Marking:

2.1 The allocation of the final mark will be as follows:

- Literature reviews – 18%
- MCQ – 40%
- Cases with Short answer questions – 42%
- A pass in all the practical OSCEs is obligatory to pass the course.

2.2 The Overall Grading will be as follows:

- Fail <50%
- Pass 50-60%
- Pass with Merit 60-70%
- Pass with Distinction >70%

3. Enquiry and Appeals:

In case of Enquiry and Appeals kindly refer to the relevant policy

4. Review and Revision:

This policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure relevance and effectiveness. Feedback from students and faculty will be considered in the review process.

5. Communication:

This policy will be communicated to all students and faculty. Any updates or changes will be communicated in a timely manner.

STUDENT REPRESENTATION POLICY

Introduction

Ultrasound Academy is convinced that student representation within the governance of the Institution is vital to evaluating and improving the effectiveness of the programs and optimising the learning experience for the student body. The Academy is committed to ensure that students' voices are valued and integrated in the decision making processes.

1. Objective:

1.1 To ensure that students are adequately represented within the governance of the Academy. This will:

- Ensure effective communication between the Academy and the student body
- Empower the students to feel that they can contribute to their educational journey
- Affirm the value of their contributions
- Ensure fairness and a student centered approach to policy and decision making
- Make program content more relevant to the student's needs
- Tailor the pedagogical approach to maximise learning

2. Scope:

2.1 To describe the process by which student representation occurs

2.2 To define the role and responsibility of the student representatives

2.3 To specify in which areas of the Institution will student representation be applicable

3. Principles:

3.1 Fair

All students will have an equal opportunity to be a student representative without any discrimination or hindrance

3.2 Transparent

Students should be directly involved and have visibility over the process

3.3 Broad

Each course or program should have its own representative to ensure that there is a broad feedback process encompassing students in different specialties and all the modalities covered by the Academy

4. Responsibilities:

Elected representatives will form part of the IQA panel for a 1 year term. It is their duty to:

- Present any concerns or issues highlighted by students regarding any aspect of the programs or any members of faculty
- Emphasise the student's perspective at the discussion table
- Ensure student centered policies and approaches
- Be the reference point for discussion between the administration and the student body
- Source feedback from the students for the purposes of the yearly educational and budget committee meetings
- Act ethically in their dealings with the other students respecting privacy and confidentiality
- Represent their peers equitably

5. Election:

5.1 Student representatives for every program/course will be chosen by their fellow peers through an election during the first in-person training day.

5.2 The Course or Program Director will explain the purpose, role and responsibility of the student representative

5.3 Students will be invited to nominate themselves for election

5.4 They will proceed to cast an anonymous vote to select the candidate

5.5 If there is a single nomination an election will be unnecessary

5.6 The Program or Course Director will forward the name of the student representative to the Administrator who will add them to the IQA panel and disseminate their contact email to the students in that course.