

## QUALITY ASSURANCE MANUAL

### BICC

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

The BICC was set up on the 3<sup>rd</sup> November 1997 by Parliamentary Resolution 74 of the same year. Its main objectives are to provide a forum to discuss the problems and issues related to the building construction sector, and to advise the Government and the private sector on ways for upgrading and monitoring the building industry. BICC is also committed to encourage research related to the impact of the construction industry on the Maltese economy.

The BICC forum consists of 25 stakeholders within the sector. There are members who are Regulators, Educational Institutions, Employers, Workers' representatives through unions, Operators, Financial Institutions, and the Professionals. To function better the BICC has 5 Working Groups which are: **Education and Training, Classification and Registration of Construction; Property Market; Regeneration of Property; Research and Innovation; and Building Regulations and EU Directives**; each working group has its own coordinator. Besides there are other ad-hoc committees such as the Eurocode Technical Team, The Skill-Card team; and the Comfort in the Home team.

The building industry is an important sector in the economy which effects the economic activity, energy imports, environmental aspects, social aspects and skill requirements. It also seeks to monitor construction's needs by assisting in the provision of well trained workers in the field who can guarantee an excellent service which will eventually improve customer's satisfaction.

In order to improve and maintain the highest standards in the construction industry a scheme was set up. This Construction Industry skill card scheme will strive to improve quality standards, health and safety practices and employment conditions. and livelihoods.

Through the CISC scheme which was approved by the parliament, BICC promised that it will enhance the public perception of the building industry whilst encouraging more youths to choose construction related careers as their livelihood. Since then, the BICC started providing further and higher education programmes in the construction trades. The programmes offered by the BICC range from an award in health and safety awareness, an occupational health and safety award for Professionals, a CPD course for Periti (continuous professional development course) and an award in dry stone wall restoration.

## **MISSION**

BICC's mission is to monitor the building industry and to advise policy makers on ways to enhance it as a strong social and economic contributor to improve sustainable development.

BICC is dedicated to creating high quality talent in order to meet the changing needs of the Construction Industry and to ensure continued availability of suitably qualified personnel in the Construction Sector.

## **2. INSTITUTIONAL PROBITY**

### **LEADING STAFF**

In fulfillment of the council's mission statement, the Building Industry Consultative Council continued increasing its momentum to improve the image of the construction industry in Malta. The BICC has an Executive Chairman, a Director, a Consultant and a Manager as Top management, directed by the Executive Board. They are responsible for the Quality assurance on a day to day basis while the Internal Quality Assurance oversees that the quality is safeguarded through processes, procedures and decisions taken on a daily basis.

An executive Secretary, coordinator and three other officers coordinate and monitor the implementation of the quality assurance system at the respective department; managing quality assurance procedures in the department, organization and conducting the self-reviews of the department, reporting of the results of the system to the management of BICC.

The strategy is one that involves everybody in the organisation. The success of a Quality Culture depends entirely on the responsibility of every BICC staff member. The collective effort of all ensures the Quality Culture BICC is aspiring to achieve. Ultimately the responsibility for establishing the Quality Culture rests with the Management Team, namely the CEO and Director of BICC. Every member of staff has a role in monitoring the quality of their work. As a result, quality assurance is shared responsibility in which responsibility for quality and standards is shared by all those who support students' learning.

The administration and other support services have an essential part to play in the assurance of quality, as the work of administration bears directly on quality and standards, in providing learning environments and support services, handling enquiries and complaints, and evaluate assessments of all staff both academic and nonacademic.

If the need arises to appoint other staff a call for application will be issued with the eligibility benchmarks as indicated in the public service management code manual ([https://publicservice.gov.mt/en/Documents/Public%20Service%20Management%20Code/PSM C.pdf](https://publicservice.gov.mt/en/Documents/Public%20Service%20Management%20Code/PSM%20Code.pdf) ).

## **EXECUTIVE BOARD**

BICC's Executive Board is responsible for the administration of the Council. It is set up as per Article 5 of the Statute and is composed by the Executive Chairman of BICC, a representative from the Lands Authority, a representative from the BICC Advisory Board and each coordinator of the five working group.

The Executive Board:

- Establishes the composition of the BICC's internal quality assurance committee;
- Approves all curricula and syllabi submitted by the Education and Training Working Group;
- Defines the strategic plan;
- Responsible for the internal approval and accreditation of programmes;
- Ensures that programmes and courses are in line with binding documents and regulations thus making the accreditation decision.
- Validating the conditions/implementation of internal and external activities.

## **Advisory Board**

The advisory board is composed of the responsibilities of the representatives of the twenty-five stakeholders which form BICC

This board establishes internal quality assurance schemes that ensure there is full transparency and a structure of clear operational accountability.

### **Operators:**

General Retailers Traders Union (GRTU),  
Federation of Building and Civil Engineering Contractors (FOBC),  
Lands Authority (LA),  
Malta Chamber of Commerce Enterprise and Industry (MCCEI),  
Federation of Estate Agents (FEA),  
Malta Developers Association (MDA),  
Housing Authority (HA)  
Works Department (WD)

### **Professionals:**

Chamber of Engineers (COE),  
Kamra tal-Periti (KTP),  
Chamber of Planners (COP)

**Educational Institutions:**

Institute for Building & Construction (MCAST),  
Employment and Training Corporation (ETC),  
University of Malta, Faculty of the Built Environment (UOM),

**Finance Institutions:**

Malta Insurance Association (MIA),  
Central Bank of Malta (CBM),

**Works Representatives:**

Forum Unions Maltin (FOR.U.M),  
General Workers Union (GWU),  
*Union Haddiema Maghqudin* (UHM)

**Regulators:**

Planning Authority (PA),  
Malta Resources Authority (MRA)  
Ministry for Energy and Health (MEH),  
Malta Competition and Consumer Affairs Authority (MCCAA)  
Occupational Health and Safety (OHSA),  
Building Regulation Office (BRO)

**Guest Stakeholders:**

Institute of Sustainable Built Environment (iSBE),  
Malta Business Network (MBN)  
Assisted Learning Programme (ALP)

BICC has the following Working groups to assist in the formulation and ongoing monitoring of policies, to be upgraded or changed as necessary. List of Working Groups:

**BUILDING REGULATIONS & EU DIRECTIVES**

This Working Group is made up by the Regulating Entities within the government sector such as the Health and Safety Authority and the Building Regulations Office, together with those directly involved such as the contractors, developers, and the professionals.

**REGENERATION OF PROPERTY**

This Working Group is composed by some Government Regulators, the developers and contractors, the professionals and other entities. The scope of this working group is to see how to regenerate vacant properties and put them back on the market. It also forwards proposals to the Government to issue incentive schemes to attract owners to regenerate their old properties.

## **PROPERTY MARKET**

The Property Market Working Group is made up by representatives coming from the developers, contractors, estate agents and financial institutions and they monitor the market. This working group is currently working on the creation of a Property Price Index.

## **RESEARCH AND INNOVATION**

This Working Group promotes research works and innovative materials suitable for the local market. This Working Group is made up by professionals, the University of Malta, the developers, the Malta Standards Authority and technical people involved directly on the subject.

## **EDUCATION & TRAINING**

This Working Group is composed by the educational institutions together with the professionals, workers' representatives and employers' with the aim to offer training to those involved in the sector. The Working Group also organises courses for the general public (Case in point during 2014 organised 2 courses about how to maintain old houses).

It Proposes new study programmes and courses for validation by the Executive Board; discusses changes in the current curricula and is the first monitoring point for new programmes; makes comments and recommendations on programmes to this board;

## **FINANCE**

BICC is a government entity and its financial operation is managed and regulated under the official Maltese Government Financial Policies. The budget is allocated following budget proposal made by the Director and passed on through the Ministry for the Environment Climate Change and Planning and the Ministry of Finance respectively. The budget at BICC is administered through the use of the SAGE accounting software. The SAGE software is used for BICC's accounts or votes. The yearly budget is broken down and split into different votes of BICC, from where the BICC suppliers are paid. As an entity BICC manages its own accounts through the use of an accounts programme. The money allocated is budgeted according to the needs and priorities set out by the Executive Board. At the end of each year the accounts are submitted and audited by an independent auditor and sent for verification to the National Audit Office. The responsibility for the budget, preparation of accounts and auditing lies with the Director Finance and Administration.

### **3. DESIGN AND APPROVAL OF PROGRAMMES**

A demand for a particular programme or module can be proposed to BICC from various stakeholders, including the industry, the lecturer, the student or government agencies. This demand is seen to by the Education Unit with the BICC to analyse the structure of this demand and assist in its structuring if necessary. The Education Unit will give the preliminary approval for a full development process by coordinating a written proper module template from lecturers or experts.

The resourcing for this module is also included before presenting to the Executive Board. If the Board of Studies approves it will pass on to MFHEA for approval and if approved it will become part of the database. Since Malta (including the BICC) is a Bologna Process signatory it abides by a workload of credits as in the referencing Report 4th revised edition February 2016 by MFHEA.

## **PUBLIC INFORMATION**

All Programmes of study with their respective entry requirements are found on the BICC's website. BICC also participates in fairs and other public activities to disseminate information and market its programmes and activities as well as to promote careers with the construction sector.

### **4. STUDENT-CENTRED LEARNING, TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT**

The Rules and Regulations of students approved by the Executive Board have an impact on student learning. The lecturer in charge of the subject designs the module including the assessment method. The lecturer will plan and prepare the activities the student must engage in. The lecturer also motivates the student during the course and guides him accordingly to achieve the awards. Feedback is given to the student in a timely manner whether written or verbal. Students receive timely feedback through the inclusion of formative assessment and through informal comments during lectures to the students. All learning programmes are based on competences, knowledge and skill. This is in line with the National commission for Further and Higher education. Students form part of the process in designing Programmes as they are represented both on the Executive Board and the Education Unit. Coordinators also directly support students. All Lecturers use different details, presentations, practical demonstration and more to make the content not only understandable but memorable. Lecturers engage students as active participants in the learning process by encouraging questions and criticism. Lecturers make use of different services of information and communication technologies. The BICC programmes are also designed to develop independent learning skills. Practical skills are part of the student's workload and they are also exposed to work based learning as part of the pedagogical method. Therefore, methods include practical sessions, discussions, direct teaching, student power point presentations, portfolios etc. Even assessment methods include ongoing modes like assignments, tasks, practical sessions and practical assessments.

### **5. STUDENT ADMISSION, PROGRESSION, RECOGNITION AND CERTIFICATION**

BICC is open to all those who have the required qualifications as indicated in the yearly prospectus. <http://www.bicc.gov.mt> BICC is also open trainee students, namely ALP Plus. Students can also progress from one level to another as stipulated in the prospectus. BICC gives full information in the Rules & Regulations which are found on the same website and printed material obtained from BICC's Further and Higher Institute.

In the design of an educational programme the Research and Innovation working group carries out research to identify trades, then the advisory board identifies the needs of the industry, aligns

learning outcomes with industry's goals and on-job tasks. These needs and standards go through the education and training working group which then assesses and implements these standards in tandem with the SSU.

Finally, these are confirmed by the Executive Board and then the organisation of courses takes off.

Courses which are carried out within our institute go through MFHEA's accreditation process. Additional coordination and organisation is had with other service providers for the courses and BICC ensures that all services providers adheres to the same standards and procedures in terms of our policy.

Once the courses are accredited the application dates and the information sessions dates in the online yearly Prospectus are published. The prospectus is proposed by the Advisory board and approved by the Executive Board. The Prospectus is found on the website. Regular reviews are carried out to update and amend the courses where necessary.

## **6. TEACHING STAFF**

Staff is selected on a demand basis by issuing a public call for application followed by interviews. Eligibility requisites depend on the specific call but professionalism is a must. Teaching staff must:

- Demonstrate sound knowledge of subject area.
- Plan and record each learning session.
- Be punctual, appropriately dressed and have relevant resources at each lecturing session.
- Demonstrate a caring, positive and helpful approach to all institute clients, visitors and enquiries.
- Make effective contributions to systematic quality improvement.
- Collegiality and support to the colleagues.
- Abide by the BICC Ethics Policy.

Lecturing Style and Practice should be:

- Energetic and enthusiastic attitude.
- Good working relationship with students.
- Apply a wide range of teaching methods.
- Lecturing methods encourage student and group awareness, confidence building, leading to personal development and independent learning.
- Different learning needs are assessed, recognized and provided for.
- Effective input on study skills.
- Practical works underpinned by theory.
- Work placements are integrated with coursework.
- Key skills are developed and integrated effectively.
- Research.

Observation of staff where a specific arrangement needs to be made to observe an individual in the performance of their job, then agreement will be made between both parties before this takes place. In the case of observation of teaching staff, this will be undertaken by the Education Unit.

## **7. LEARNING RESOURCES AND STUDENT SUPPORT**

It is the intention of the BICC to make available to both staff and students, a range of the most relevant and up – to – date software, hardware and other learning resources. A self-assessment questionnaire is also available online where all clients and students can write and send their comments and suggestions. Both the self-assessment and the questionnaire report are screened by the course coordinator and a report is done and given to top management for any deemed necessary action available, within the budget parameters set for this area. This should include applications software, proprietary vocational software and systems, external database and Internet access, books, magazines, journals, and a range of staff development resources.

It is the responsibility of all staff and students to treat the learning resources available in a manner which: -

- maintains the security of individual I.T. areas and Institute systems.
- does not damage or corrupt any of the resources made available at any time. If any breach of the above conditions occurs, the individual responsible may be restricted from accessing any, or all, of the resources until it can be demonstrated that there will be no further misuse or abuse in the future. Furthermore, the individual concerned may be required to reimburse the Institute for any costs incurred from loss of security, damage or corruption of learning resources, facilities and equipment

## **8. INFORMATION MANAGEMENT**

The Education Unit keeps records of all students. Data is kept both electronically as well as hard bound copy for future reference and back up purposes. A fee to the IDPC (Information and Data Protection Commissioner) is also paid annually in this regard. Participation, retention and success rates are part of the data collected through a system operated by the IT office. The data is used internally as necessary, as it gives a clear picture to the Top Management, and programmes results which are part of evaluation. The Education Unit can use this data for discussion in their meetings.

## **9. PUBLIC INFORMATION**

It is the responsibility of the BICC's Executive Board to maintain their programme portfolios so that they are up – to – date and include all the necessary items. A copy of the portfolios should be given to the Education Manager, who will be responsible for monitoring the accuracy of information included in the portfolios and initiating the replacement of inaccurate information where necessary.

The following items should be kept in the programme portfolios in the following order: -  
SECTION 1

- Staff organisation chart
- Staff job descriptions
- Staff CVs
- Staff training status summary
- Minutes of team meetings
- Observation reports

- Student questionnaire results

## **10. ONGOING MONITORING AND PERIODIC REVIEW OF PROGRAMMES**

The Education Unit is responsible, under the guidance of the Executive Board and Executive Secretary, for how the programmes are delivered and assessed. There will be discussion with tutors and learners as part of a sampling process. All engagements will be minuted. The rationale behind the sampling is to include a variety of students, different methods of assessment and different assessment sites.

## **11. CYCLICAL EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE**

The BICC is subject to an external quality audit by the National Commission for further and Higher Education every 5 years. The audit is carried out on 11 standards and judged as follows:

- Exceeds Standards
- Meeting Standards
- Needs Improvement
- Does Not Meet Standards

Following this EQA audit, an EQA follow up action plan is formulated to address the results of the audit. This action plan forms part of the strategic planning document for Executive management.