



MAURITIUS QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY



CODE OF PRACTICE: A SET OF
REQUIREMENTS AND
STANDARDS FOR TRAINING
INSTITUTIONS AND STUDENTS
FOR QUALITY SERVICE AND
EFFECTIVE LEARNING



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MAURITIUS QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY
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INTRODUCTION

The Mauritius Qualifications Authority is a body corporate set up under the Mauritius Qualifications Authority Act (“the Act”) having as objects -

- (a) the development, implementation and maintenance of a National Qualifications Framework;
- (b) ensuring compliance with provisions for registration and accreditation in the Act; and
- (c) ensuring that standards and qualifications are internationally comparable.

In line with its objects, this Code of Practice has been designed to establish requirements and standards to be strictly adhered to by training institutions (TIs) and students. The ultimate goal is to foster a quality service amongst training institutions and promote effective learning by students.

Objects of the Code of Practice

The objects of this Code of Practice shall be to -

- (a) ensure quality service and effective learning;
- (b) establish professional standards and requirements for TIs and students;
- (c) foster transparency and disclosure of all required information; and
- (d) safeguard a student’s overall interest and welfare.

STRUCTURE OF THE CODE OF PRACTICE

The Code identifies three distinct areas, each comprising of a series of recommended practices and principles -

- (a) Section One – General Requirements of Training Institutions**
- (b) Section Two – Student Support and Information**
- (c) Section Three – Contractual Agreement between Training Institutions and Students**

The overarching principles of the Code rest on transparency of information and quality training. The recommended practices and principles are meant to be observed by TIs and their students.

THE CODE OF PRACTICE AND GUIDANCE

Section 1 – General Requirements of Training Institutions

This section has been devised in conformity with national and international practices. It is meant to serve a dual purpose, namely to -

- (i) set requirements and standards to be met by training institutions; and
- (ii) provide guidance with regard to their daily operations.

It thus sets out the expectations for a quality service, relevant training, provision for comprehensive information and support available to students.

1.1 Information Policy

1.1.1. *Marketing and Advertising*

TIs shall:

- (i) express clearly and unambiguously in any promotion of courses, providing up-to-date information so that prospective students may know exactly what is being offered and what they are committing themselves;
- (ii) genuinely and accurately represent themselves and mention facilities available in all marketing and promotional materials so that they may not be confused with any other TI, product and services;
- (iii) not provide any false or misleading information, whether by words or otherwise, about the products or services being offered;
- (iv) not make any statement or undertake commitment in any form of publicity, which cannot be substantiated or fulfilled and provide information which is realistically in line, amongst others, with the certification provided by them and job prospects for the prospective students (e.g. promises to secure employment either locally or internationally);
- (v) ascertain that terms and conditions relating to enrolled students are clearly spelt out, understandable, visible and accessible to prospective students and provide adequate information in relation thereto upon request by prospective students (e.g. information available during educational fairs or affixed at reception of training premises, etc); and
- (vi) clearly state the applicable tuition fees and any cost for other additional services offered by TI (e.g. course/programme fee, registration fee, examinations fees or other chargeable services such as medical check-ups, etc)

1.2 Pre-enrolment

1.2.1. *Sales activities*

TIs shall:

- (i) ensure that authorised representatives of the training institutions (e.g. sales representatives, recruiting agents, etc.) and all other persons involved in these activities act ethically and responsibly, providing accurate and valid information in relation to the TI;
- (ii) monitor and assess the performance and conduct of all persons involved, either locally or internationally, in their marketing activities;
- (iii) inform the prospective student of his/her commitment with regards to repayment, if applicable, in cases where the TI is assisting the prospective student in obtaining a grant (Government or private) or any independent funding (e.g. loan, scholarships, etc)

Note: grants and other types of funding cannot be marketed as scholarships offered by TIs;

- (iv) make sure that contact details of appropriately qualified personnel from their marketing department are provided to the public for queries pertaining to products and services on offer;
- (v) ensure that sales representatives provide prospective students with full information prior to their enrolment regarding the following:
 - (a) certification of course;
 - (b) name of Awarding Body and the conditions for awarding or withholding of the final certification;
 - (c) Start and end date of course;
 - (d) provision of all financial information (e.g. fee policy and other conditions such as repayment facilities through instalments);
 - (e) contractual details and agreement (e.g. well-defined terms and conditions regarding training provisions, rules/regulations, procedures and policies, etc);
 - (f) refund policy;
 - (g) complaints handling procedure;
 - (h) Appeals procedure;
 - (i) rules and regulations of the TI (e.g. expected conduct and behaviour in class, on training premises, dress code, discipline etc.);

- (j) attendance requirements especially with regard to international students given the implication on their visa status, amongst others;
 - (k) Assessment and examination modes.
- (vi) be accountable and responsible for all actions and omissions (including misrepresentation of any kind) by persons appointed by them and conducting sales, marketing or recruiting activities.

1.2.2. Selection and Admission Procedures

TIs shall ensure that students -

- (i) are informed about the entry requirement of programme;
- (ii) have the required language proficiency (e.g. especially with regard to international students) to successfully undertake and complete the course;
- (iii) have been given sufficient time to read and to understand the requirements of the training institution prior to signing of contractual agreement;
- (iv) are financially secure to effect payment of fees (particularly for international students to avoid flouting of existing legislations and regulations wherein students may seek employment illegally);
- (v) are issued written acknowledgements for all payments effected and deposits made (e.g. invoices shall clearly illustrate detailed breakdown of tuition fees, exam fees and, if applicable, other chargeable services being provided by the training institution).
- (vi) are provided with a copy of the signed contractual agreement with the TI;
- (vii) are provided with log-ins facilities where applicable (e.g. especially for international awarding bodies) to access their accounts for the purpose of easing the selection and admission procedures.

1.2.3. Course/Programme Information

TIs shall ensure that -

- (i) clear information is provided on attendance certification and certification towards award programmes.
- (ii) detailed information is provided regarding structure of course/ programme, duration of programme, requirements of awarding body, assessment/examination mode and placement requirements. Details of aforementioned shall be made clear prior to a contract for learning being entered into.

1.3 Finance Provisions – (Fees, Refund, Financial Schemes and Additional Cost)

1.3.1. Course Fee

TIs shall -

- (i) communicate course fee as per approval/accreditation letter for non-award and award programmes respectively;
- (ii) clearly state and communicate any reserved rights if any, to change the course fee and any related cost prior to enrolment so as to avoid prejudice to students;
- (iii) issue a receipt for all payments received and advise students to secure same;
- (iv) provide clear information to students on payment of fees, collection methods and applicable sanctions for late payment;
- (v) furnish international students with information pertaining to living costs (e.g. accommodation, food, transport and medical care) for the duration of their course in Mauritius.
 - *Where a TI provides accommodation services, students must be made aware from the outset of conditions and related information for such facility.*

1.3.2. Refund Policy

TIs shall -

- (i) communicate clear contents of their refund policy, including sanctions or associated liabilities for late/non-payment of fees;
- (ii) ensure that a copy of the refund policy is provided to students and that they are made aware of and understand the content prior to signing any contractual agreement;
- (iii) indicate the conditions under which full or part refund may be granted to students and any such refund is observed by the training institution.

1.3.3. Financial Schemes – Independent Fund

- (i) TIs shall provide students with full and exact information regarding financial schemes such as Scholarships, Grants or Loans so that students are fully aware of financial implications and commitment in case of repayment.

1.3.4. Additional cost and chargeable services

TIs shall -

- (i) inform students of the cost implications prior to the signing of an agreement (written binding contract, conditions, rules and regulations of the training institution) and the start of course/programme;
- (ii) indicate, where applicable, any additional cost to be charged to students; Such costs must be clearly highlighted in all documentation and the concluding agreement.
- (iii) ensure that there are no additional or unexpected costs charged to both local and international students. Any change in cost from parties concerned (e.g. Awarding Body, Mauritius Examinations Syndicate (MES)) shall have to be notified by the TIs to the MQA and subsequently, the students be informed within one week of receipt of such change.

1.4 Documentation, procedures and policies

1.4.1. Student Charter

- (i) TIs shall ensure that a Student Charter is devised in line with the services offered by the TI. That Charter shall set out the general principles of the partnership between the student and the TI.
- (ii) The Student Charter shall take into consideration, amongst others, the following aspects -
 - (a) Diversity, Respect and Communication;
 - (b) Training, Learning, Research and Assessment;
 - (c) Finance;
 - (d) Complaints, Appeals, Discipline; and
 - (e) Student Services

1.4.2. Complaints Handling Procedure

TIs shall ensure that -

- (i) an adequate and fitter purpose complaints handling procedure is drawn up, implemented and properly disseminated to students in the form of a manual or other such written form, for the purpose of handling any complaint pertaining to the TI;
- (ii) the students are informed, at the time of enrolment, of the applicable complaints handling procedure.

- (iii) the complaint handling procedure sets out clearly the various steps involved in making a complaint and identifies the relevant paperwork to be completed by the student when making a complaint;
- (iv) complaints are dealt in a prompt and courteous manner whilst ensuring that suitable records are kept for verification purposes;
- (v) outcome of complaint is provided to all parties concerned; and
- (vi) all reasonable steps to resolve the matter are taken by the TI before initiating the MQA's Complaint Handling Procedure.

1.4.3. Academic Appeals (Academic progress and Awards)

- (i) TIs shall ensure that information pertaining to the appeal procedure are communicated to students and that same is dealt by an independent panel.

1.4.4. Disciplinary procedure

TIs shall -

- (i) ensure that there is an adequate and fit for purpose disciplinary procedures drawn up and communicated to students; and
- (ii) the disciplinary proceedings are conducted in an independent manner.

1.4.5. Data Compilation Procedures

TIs shall -

- (i) ensure appropriate procedures are drawn up and implemented to collect relevant data pertaining to students (e.g. profile of students such as age, gender, field of study, entry requirement, academic background and outcome data, amongst others);
- (ii) ensure that data collected meets the requirement of the MQA and are submitted when requested by the MQA; and
- (iii) inform students that data related to them may be communicated to the MQA for the purpose of verifying compliance with the relevant legislation.

Section 2 – Student Support and Information

2.1 Staff

2.1.1 Contact Point

TIs shall designate -

- (i) an appropriate person to liaise with the student and the management of the TI (e.g. a programme co-ordinator or international officer); and
- (ii) a suitable and qualified person to act as student counsellor.

2.2 Contractual Agreement

2.2.1 Induction

- (i) TIs shall ensure that students benefit from a face-to-face induction session. In addition, TIs shall ensure that an online induction session is provided to international students, where particular needs, such as inter-cultural awareness have to be addressed.

2.2.2 Course requirements

TIs shall

- (i) ensure that all course and teaching materials and documentation materials are accurate and up-to-date (e.g. change in the Awarding Body);
- (ii) assume complete responsibility for any training delivered by them, whether conducted by full-time employees or not;
- (iii) TIs must monitor and assess the performance of its training personnel;
- (iv) return assessment copies, excluding test and examinations, to students following marking of same as per set schedule; and
- (v) ensure that appropriate feedback is provided to the students on all written assessments.

2.3 Student Study Pack

2.3.1. Manuals, policies and procedures

- (i) TIs shall ensure that each student enrolled at their training institutions, is provided with a student study pack which contains, amongst others, the following -
 - (a) learning Materials;
 - (b) rules and Regulations of the training institution;

- (c) complaints Handling and Appeals Procedures;
- (d) attendance requirements;
- (e) disciplinary sanctions;
- (f) course outline and content;
- (g) calendar for the academic year and a timetable for the semester;
- (h) mode of assessment;
- (i) the relevant safety and health requirements; and
- (j) trainer information.

2.3.2. *Existing Regulations and Legislations pertaining to International Students*

TIs shall ensure that -

- (i) prior to coming to Mauritius, international students obtain an official offer for admission in an accredited training programme;
- (ii) international students are apprised of existing regulations and legislations pertaining to their residence permit and conditions attached therein (e.g. part-time employment) prior to the signing of any contractual agreement; and
- (iii) international students are informed of legal sanctions and liabilities should they breach the conditions attached to their residence permit.

Section 3 – Contractual Agreement between Training Institutions and Students

3.1 Prior to signing of the Contractual Agreement

3.1.1 Responsibility of Training Institutions

- (i) TIs shall provide -
 - (a) up-to-date information on key aspects pertaining to the course e.g. entry requirement, content, all fees and associated costs, certification, assessment or examination mode, relevant legal provisions etc.;
 - (b) clear guidance regarding enrolment instructions, study periods and commencement and end date of course; and
 - (c) all necessary documentation pertaining to the institution, its policies, its regulations and facilities.

- (ii) TIs shall inform prospective students -
 - (a) that responsibility for the submission of accurate information on their application forms lies with them;
 - (b) of their duty to update TIs with any such relevant medical condition or other special needs potentially affecting their learning capacity, such as disability, seizures, etc;
 - (c) of their obligation to make sufficient funds available for training and associated expenses;
 - (d) of their obligation to effect payment due to the TIs by them in a timely manner;
 - (e) take cognizance and be aware of the requirements of the course and the training institution; and
 - (f) take good notice of conditions attached to enrolment and contractual agreement.

3.2 Once signed and enrolled

3.2.1 Responsibility of Training Institutions

- (i) TIs shall provide -
 - (a) a comprehensive induction whereby students are informed of module choices, certification, training staff and other additional services on offer;
 - (b) adequate support after enrolment and ensure appropriate staff are delegated to oversee delivery of training (e.g. in addition to Manager and Programme Officer of TIs);
 - (c) Student Study Pack containing information regarding services, regulations and procedures;

- (d) students of applicable sanctions for late submission, plagiarism or cheating;
 - (e) clear guidelines for the arrangements of fair and timely assessment, marking and moderation; and
 - (f) students, where applicable, with the findings/reports of external examiners.
- (ii) TIs shall inform students -
- (a) that they need to attend induction and immediately seek clarifications in case of difficulties;
 - (b) to ensure that they enrol for the right course/programme/modules;
 - (c) that they have to behave decently at all times and take notice of prescribed rules and regulations and govern themselves accordingly;
 - (d) to familiarise themselves with the mode of assessment/examination and marking scheme of the training institution/awarding body; and
 - (e) of the role of external examiners and take into account their findings.

3.3 During the training

3.3.1 Responsibility of Training Institutions

- (i) TIs shall -
- (a) dispense high quality training;
 - (b) provide up-to-date support material and resources;
 - (c) ensure that students are treated equitably and fairly at all times and training is held in a safe environment;
 - (d) designate appropriate staff to provide support throughout the student's studies and in non-academic issues;
 - (e) notify students well in advance of any cancellation of event, class, change in schedule of classes, trainers or venue of training;
 - (f) provide clear information regarding assessment arrangements, deadlines for assignments and time frames for feedback on submitted work;
 - (g) ensure that appropriate records are maintained throughout the conduct of course (e.g. records of achievement, attendance, feedback, evaluation of training, etc); and
 - (h) initiate corrective action(s) upon non-compliance with the rules and regulations of the TI by students, trainers or such other employees and apply sanctions where necessary.

- (ii) TIs shall inform students to -
 - (a) attend all training sessions and be punctual;
 - (b) contribute and actively participate in class discussions and learning activities;
 - (c) submit original assessments which are referenced as per the requirements of the training institution;
 - (d) ensure assessment requirements are complied with (e.g. meeting deadlines, taking part in assessments/examination);
 - (e) treat with care and respect all property of the training institution (e.g. building, resources available, equipment and furniture amongst others);
 - (f) respond to feedback provided on course work and improve upon in case of poor performance and /or not as per pre-set standards;
 - (g) ensure that contact details are correct and up-to-date (e.g. personal phone numbers and email addresses and residential address)
Note: international students to promptly inform TIs of any change pertaining to arrangement for accommodation;
 - (h) inform the training institution of absences due to illness or other exceptional circumstances and to provide documentary evidence whenever required; and
 - (i) attend scheduled disciplinary meetings when convened.

Review

This Code of Practice is subject to review every 5 years or as and when the need arises.

References

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