Introduction

Welcome to the University of Technology and Applied Sciences – Ibra (UTAS-Ibra) English Language Centre (ELC).

As one of the leading institutions of higher education in the field of technology in the Sultanate of Oman, we depend on each staff member to be an ambassador of the vision, mission, goals, and values of the University.

This ELC Staff Handbook is Version 2.1 of the handbook which was developed through a concerted effort of the selected ELC Staff. It aims to inform, guide, and update both new and existing faculty members with information about working at UTAS-Ibra, ELC. It is recommended that all staff read and familiarize themselves with the general policies and procedures applicable at the university and the ELC.

The handbook functions as a ready reference and a summary of the systems of Governance and Management, the General Foundation Program, and the Academic and Non-Academic Services that the teacher has to provide to the students, and the Staff Support Services.

Heads of Sections/ Centre/ Coordinator(s) are to be consulted in case of doubt or for further clarification. In case there is a policy change, staff are expected to comply with the most recent/current version. The current version is prevalent and supersedes all other pre-existing versions of the Handbook.

With the spirit of teamwork, we all look forward to a continued effort towards building a growing reputation for the university.
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I. Strategic Plan Elements

**Mission**

To build competitive and innovative capabilities by providing a stimulating environment and effective engagement with community and industry to promote excellence in learning, research, and innovation.

**Vision**

Leading in technological and applied education to contribute to the development of a sustainable and knowledge-based society.

**Goals**

- Achieve academic excellence
- Foster institutional excellence
- Build sustainable and strategic partnerships
- Pursue excellence in research, innovation, and entrepreneurship

**Strategic Priorities**

- Teaching and learning
- Governance and management
- Research, innovation and entrepreneurship
- Industry and community engagement

**Graduate Attributes**

- Communication skills
- Critical thinking, analysis, and problem solving
- Creativity and innovation
- Entrepreneurial skills
- Lifelong learning

**Values**

- Diversity and inclusion
- Integrity
- Loyalty and identity
- Collaboration
- Excellence

**الرسالة**

بناء عمليات تفاعلية ومنظمة من خلال توفير بيئة أكاديمية وشبكة متصلة مع المجتمع وقطاع الأعمال للتنزه التزام القيادة ودعم البحث العلمي والابتكار.

**الرؤية**

القيادة في التعليم التقني والتطبيق للمساعدة في بناء مجتمع معمر مستدام.

**الأهداف**

- تحقيق معايير الأكاديمية
- تومزير معايير الأكاديمية
- بناء شراكات مستدامة وستراتيجية
- تحسين المبادرات البحثية والابتكارية

**ال الأولويات الاستراتيجية**

- التعليم والتعلم
- الإدارة والقيادة
- البحث والابتكار
- التعاون والابتكار
- التشارك مع المجتمع

**المواصفات الجامعية**

- المهارات التواصلية
- التفكير النقدي وحل المسائل
- الإبداع والابتكار
- المهارات الإدارية والعرفان
- التعلم مدى الحياة
II. Overview of the ELC

The English Language Centre (ELC) offers intensive English training programs: The General Foundation Program (GFP) and the Post Foundation Program (PFP). These programs are managed by the ELC Council (ELCC) in coordination with various committees. Additionally, to implement the programs, qualified English teachers from various countries are hired. They adhere to the unified curriculum of the GFP and the PFP - English. The curriculum implementation is guided by the Common Pedagogical Framework (CPF) and the evaluation by the Curriculum Development and Review Framework.

The ELC receives new students twice every academic year following the provisions of the CoTs bylaws. Students are placed based on the Entry and Exit Standards of the university. Each teacher is responsible for teaching more than one group of students and is given a specific group to advise throughout the semester.

Teachers facilitate the students’ achievement of the program outcomes which are assessed through balanced formative and summative evaluation approaches. To complement learning, the centre provides student academic and non-academic support services. Likewise, teachers are provided with support services to improve the delivery of the program and to promote a better organizational climate.
III. Governance and Management

The University of Technology and Applied Sciences – Ibra (UTAS-Ibra) is governed by the university administration.

The English Language Centre has an efficient and effective management structure that provides proper directions and ensures that the operation of different committees, and their related activities adhere to established policies and procedures. It has a well-defined organizational structure (see Figure 1) that regulates the hierarchy of management, authority, reporting lines, and responsibilities of all its members to guarantee its smooth operation. The efficient management of the centre’s financial and physical resources is supported by UTAS-Ibra.

A. The ELCC

The English Language Centre (ELC) has a council. It is chaired by the Head of the Centre (HoC) with the membership of the Head of Section for English Language Programs (HoS-ELP) and the Head of Section for Curriculum and Teaching Methods (HoS-CTM). It is the governing and decision-making body of the centre. It consults with concerned level and committee coordinators, when necessary. The duties and responsibilities of the ELCC are stipulated in Article 23 of CoTs bylaws.

B. Head of Centre

The Head of the Centre, who is also a teaching member of staff, is the chairperson of the ELCC. He/She ensures that the centre operates following the requirement of the University of Technology and Applied Sciences. Duties and responsibilities of the Head of the Centre are laid down in Article 20 of the CoTs bylaws.

C. The ELC Sections

The ELC has two sections: The Curriculum and Teaching Methods, and the English Language Programs. These sections are supervised by the HoS-CTM and the HoS-ELP.

D. Head of Section for Curriculum and Teaching Methods (CTM)

The Head of the Curriculum and Teaching Methods oversees the implementation of the program and delivery plans according to schedules each semester. He/She works towards the development of a curriculum and the enhancement of the relationship with the concerned institutions. He/She ensures that the learning objectives are met, establishes and develops a
question bank, evaluates staff performance, and undertakes other tasks assigned by the Head of the English Language Centre (ref. Article 21 of the CoTs bylaws).

E. Head of Section for the English Language Programs (ELP)
The Head of the English Language Programs Section is responsible for setting up the English language plans and programs, identifying obstacles that hinder their implementation, and suggests means to overcome these obstacles in coordination with the concerned section. He/She also oversees the setting of examinations following the English Language Centre plans and programs and does so in coordination with the concerned Sections. He/She suggests areas of training for members of the teaching and technical support staff, evaluates staff performance, and carries out any other tasks assigned by the Head of the English Language Centre (ref. Article 21 of the CoTs bylaws).

F. The ELC Management Committee
The ELC Management Committee (ELC MC) comprises of the committees that are institutionalized to support the ELCC in its implementation of activities based on its policies, procedures, and guidelines as described by the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) which are set out in the ELC Operational Plan. Its lines of reporting and coordination are illustrated in the ELC Management Committee Structure (see Figure 1). These committees prepare their respective action plans based on the approved Terms of Reference. These committees also prepare reports relevant to the responsibilities assigned to them.
1. Description of ELC Committees

**Data Management Committee (DMC)** – Collects and manages data and documents of the Centre. It ensures that the evaluation of all ELC core activities is planned and implemented.

**English Society (ES)** – Organizes extracurricular activities to develop ELC students’ language skills, confidence, and motivation. It establishes linkages with professional bodies and other HEIs to further and better support student development needs.

**Examination Committee (EC)** – Prepares tests and exams. Its members facilitate exams and monitor marking procedures.
Industry and Community Engagement Committee (ICEC) – Establishes and maintains relations with local and regional communities, to communicate and build a partnership with stakeholders.

Internal Curriculum Review Committee (ICRC) – Reviews and improves the General Foundation Program and manages the standardization of teaching materials following national and international standards. It includes the Staff-Student Program Team. This team has student members who are directly involved in monitoring and reviewing programs and resources through interviews.

Internal Quality Assurance Committee (IQAC) – Ensures the implementation of all related quality assurance measures. The committee includes the Policy Management Team (PMT), Risk Management Team (RMT), and Benchmarking Team (BT).

Staff Development Committee (SDC) – Organizes internal and external staff development programs and activities that cater to professional growth to achieve excellence and high quality in teaching and learning. The committee includes the Professional Development Team (PDT), Staff Induction Team (SIT), and Staff Club Team (SCT).

Student Guidance Committee (SGC) – Ensures the provision of student guidance, counseling, and academic advising. Also, it is responsible for organizing student support programs. The committee includes the Academic Support Program (ASP) Team, Counselling Team, and the Writing Centre.

Teaching and Learning Resources Committee (TLRC) – Ensures that all learning resources in the centre are adequate and well-maintained. It also acts on any reported resource-related concerns. The committee includes the E-Learning Team which is responsible for managing and giving staff support on the use of Learning Management Systems.

Timetable Committee (TC) – Prepares course plans and, timetables for classes in coordination with the HoS for ELP. The committee also prepares the exam invigilation schedule in coordination with the Examination Committee.

Website and Publication Committee (WPC) – Creates a platform where all Centre activities are posted. The committee publishes the centre newspaper called *Rendezvous* for teachers and students to express their views. It coordinates with other committees.
and serves as a liaison between the university, industry and the community. It is responsible for updating the ELC Section on the university website. This includes giving information about activities and disseminating documents.

The centre also designates staff representatives to the following College Committees:

1. Research and Consultancy Committee
2. Health, Safety, and Environment Committee
3. Industry and Community Engagement Committee
4. Marketing Committee
5. Policy Management Committee
6. Project Resource Committee
7. Policy Management Committee
8. Risk Management Committee
9. Strategic Plan Development Committee

G. Planning and Monitoring Process

The English Language Centre supports the university in the achievement and realization of its mission and vision. To ensure the alignment of its activities with the strategic plan of the university, it refers to the Planning Mechanism (see Figure 2) in the development, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of its plans. Adherence to the Planning Mechanism ensures the transparency of information needed to come up with the decisions necessary to enhance the institutional effectiveness in providing quality education.
Figure 2: Planning Mechanism

Source: Planning Mechanism, v1.0
H. Policy Management

A comprehensive and well-managed set of policies and procedures do not only support an organization by communicating boundaries and expectations, establishing a culture of compliance but these also help the organization achieve its objectives. The ELC adheres to the Policy Development and Review Process in (see Figure 3).

![Policy Development and Review Process Chart](source: Policy and Procedures Management Framework, v3.0)
I. Risk Management System

The ELC adheres to the Risk Management Policy and the ICT Risk Management Framework, v1.0 in identifying, analyzing, evaluating, and mitigating anticipated risks that may affect its day-to-day operation (see Figure 4). Risk management is coordinated by the ELC Risk Management Team, the coordinator of which represents the centre within the College Risk Management Committee. This team manages the preparation of the ELC Risk Management Plan, monitors its implementation, and prepares the ELC Risk Mitigation Report.

Figure 4: Risk Management Workflow

Source: ICT Risk Management Framework, v1.0

J. Health, Safety, and Environment (HSE)

HSE is a system run by the university Health, Safety and Environment Committee (HSEC), which ensures the safety and protection of staff, students, and visitors. Also, it creates awareness of safety procedures to ensure the involvement and commitment of all stakeholders. Any related matters are reported to HSEC through the proper channels for further analysis, evaluation, and effective resolution.
IV. Student Learning by Course Work Program

A. Teaching Quality

The ELC promotes the use of innovative teaching methods to ensure the quality of teaching in the implementation of its programs. It uses the CoTs’ *Common Pedagogical Framework* (CPF) as a guide in teaching, learning, and assessment. The CPF makes teachers aware of the need to facilitate learning using different teaching methods in an environment that considers students’ individual differences. The relationship between and among the major components that shape the teaching philosophy of CoTs is illustrated in Figure 5.

![Pedagogical Framework of CoTs](image)

*Figure 5: Pedagogical Framework of CoTs*

*Source: Common Pedagogical Framework, v1.5*

The ELC offers two programs: General Foundation Program and the Post-Foundation Program – English.
B. General Foundation Program (GFP)

The General Foundation Program is designed to equip students with knowledge and skills in English Language, General Study Skills, Information Technology and Mathematics. It aims at developing students’ linguistic proficiency, mathematical skills, computing skills, and study skills to prepare students for higher level of studies.

1. Program Offerings

The GFP English courses are offered in four levels (Levels 1, 2, 3, 4), in addition to three courses of Mathematics and one course of Computing. Math courses are offered to students from Levels 2 to 4. The Computing course is offered to students in Level 4. The Applied and Pure Math courses are simultaneously offered in Levels 3 & 4 to allow students to register according to their specialization and the Basic Math course is offered in Level 2. The General Study Skills content is embedded in the English, Math and Computing. Courses as illustrated Figure 6: GFP Structure: Course Offerings.

![Figure 5: GFP Structure: Course Offerings](source: Common GFP Structure, v1.0)
2. General Foundation Program Aims

The GFP aims to:

1. Help students gain effective command of the required skills in English Language, Mathematics, and Information Technology.
2. Provide realistic learning opportunities for students to speak, listen, read, and write academic English confidently and effectively.
3. Provide a solid foundation in English, Mathematics, and Information Technology to allow students to perform successfully in a variety of academic programs at a higher level.
4. Equip students with the skills and attitudes to successfully participate in lifelong learning in their academic programs and future careers.
5. Develop social competence by helping students acquire teamwork and decision-making skills.
6. Develop academic competence which will include logical and abstract reasoning, problem solving, higher-level cognitive and critical thinking skills.

3. GFP Level Course Objectives

Course objectives are set out to provide specific targets for each GFP-English Level (see Table 1). These objectives are adapted from the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) and cross-referenced with the Oman Academic Standards (OAS) for GFP.
Table 1: GFP Level Course Objectives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Course Objectives</th>
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| 1     | 1. Can understand and use in speech and writing familiar everyday expressions and basic phrases and sentences aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type.  
      | 2. Can introduce him/herself and others and can speak about and ask and answer questions about social, academic and work-related activities.  
      | 3. Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.  
      | 4. While studying can manage time and accept responsibility according to OAS # 6.2.1. |
| 2     | 1. Can understand and use in speech and writing sentences at an elementary level related to social, academic and employment areas.  
      | 2. Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters.  
      | 3. Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need.  
      | 4. While studying can manage time and accept responsibility according to OAS # 6.2.1. |
| 3     | 1. Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, study, social life and employment.  
      | 2. Can deal with most survival situations likely to arise while interacting using English.  
      | 3. Can produce connected texts on topics which are familiar, or of personal interest or of a type with which a student aiming to study at a college of higher education ought to be familiar.  
      | 4. Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes and ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.  
      | 5. While studying can manage time and accept responsibility according to OAS # 6.2.1. |
| 4     | 1. Can understand the main ideas of complex texts on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialization.  
      | 2. Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with expert speakers quite possible without strain for either party.  
      | 3. Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.  
      | 4. While studying can manage time and accept responsibility according to GFP Oman Academic Standards (OAS) # 6.2.1. As part of the Level 4 Program, learners will acquire the research skills, note taking skills and presentation skills specified by OAS # 6.2.2, 6.2.3 and 6.2.4. |

Source: Common English Language Curriculum, v4.0

4. GFP Management Committee

The overall management of the GFP lies with the Head of Centre who is supported by the two Heads of Sections. The HoS-CTM oversees the implementation of GFP-English courses in coordination with the HoS-ELP. The implementation of Math and IT Courses is managed by the Information Technology Department and facilitated by the designated GFP-Math Coordinator and GFP-IT Coordinator. These coordinators liaise with the Head of ELC through the HoS-ELP on matters concerning registration, class schedules, and exam schedules. The lines of coordination and authority in the GFP Management Committee is illustrated in Figure 7.
5. GFP Entry and Exit Standards

The ELC receives new students twice in an academic year: Semester 1 and Semester 2. Those who met the GFP Exit Standards will immediately proceed to the specialization programs, otherwise, they are required to take the English Placement Test, the Math Placement Test (PT), and the Computing Entry Test. Based on their scores in the English Placement Test, students are categorized into Level 1, 2, 3 or 4 according to the set criteria. Those who score 76 and above in the placement test are given the Level 4 Exit Exam. If they pass, they are exempted from studying English. A student score in the Math Placement Test and Computing Entry Test determines his/her enrollment in the relevant Math and Computing courses.

To exit the program, students have to pass Level 4 and complete the Math and Computing Courses. Figure 8 shows the GFP student progression and entry to specialization programs.
C. Teaching and Learning

The ELC programs are delivered in two modes:

1. Face-to-Face Sessions

These are conducted in classrooms that are equipped with Wi-Fi, computers, LCD projectors, and white screens. The computers are connected to the college network and enabled to connect to the internet.

2. Online Sessions

These are conducted using MS Teams following the Guidelines for Online Classes which stipulates the six essential components of online teaching and some important notes in the utilization of MS Teams. Specific provisions about planning the virtual class, its delivery, constant communication with students, academic advising, course assessment, and classroom rules are explained in detail in the guidelines.
The following are the Learning Management Systems (LMS) used in the centre for online teaching and learning:

a. MS Teams
This application is used as an alternative platform. At the beginning of the semester, each academic staff creates MS Teams accounts for their classes and adds students to the group according to the list given to them by the registrar. Teachers conduct online classes, communicate with students using the channel posts or private chat messages, provide supplementary class materials, exercises, and give feedback on students’ performance and assignments.

b. MyELT
MyELT is a web-based learning management system that is designed to support the GFP prescribed textbook – *Pathways*. It allows teachers and learners to access the system using the account anytime, anywhere.

The GFP teachers register their students into their respective MyELT course at the beginning of each semester. During the first week, the teachers train their students on how to access MyELT. Each week, all teachers assign exercises to students based on the textbook units that have been taught in the classrooms. Students log into their MyELT account and complete these tasks as continuous assessments or as additional tasks. Teachers check students’ use of MyELT by generating reports.

c. Moodle
Moodle is a dynamic learning environment for students. This Learning Management System (LMS) can be accessed on the front page of the university website. It is used as a common learning platform for students to access the level course materials, exercises, and teachers’ feedback on their activities during the semester. Students can download materials and upload their assignments onto Moodle. Graded online assessments and exams are conducted through Moodle as well.

3. Monitoring of Teaching Quality
The effectiveness and implementation of teaching and learning activities is evaluated through:

a. Class Observation
This is done by the ELCC and a designated subject expert to ensure the continuous improvement in quality of teaching and learning. It aims to:
Monitor the quality of teaching and learning;

Provide constructive feedback to academic staff members on the delivery of their lessons; and

Identify areas for professional development.

Class observation can be formative and/or evaluative. Adhering to an approved schedule, it is done using the prescribed form. A feedback/post-observation session with the observed staff is held within four working days after the observation to discuss the strengths and weaknesses observed and the corresponding suggestions for improvement. Observed staff then receive a copy of the duly signed class observation form.

b. Student Feedback on Teaching and Learning (SFTL)

Using the prescribed survey tool, SFTL is conducted in Semester 1 and 2 under the supervision of the Quality Assurance Department. It aims to:

Monitor the quality of teaching and learning; and

Identify areas for professional development.

4. Academic Integrity

The ELC promotes academic integrity by adhering to the provisions of the Plagiarism Policy. This policy applies to all UTAS staff and students to inculcate a spirit of honesty and ethical integrity at work, to protect and maintain UTAS reputation and academic standards. The definition and instances of plagiarism are stipulated in the policy.

5. Procedures in dealing with Staff Plagiarism

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<th>S.N.</th>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. PLAGIARISM PREVENTION</td>
<td>Disseminate the policy to all staff.</td>
<td>HoD/HoC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Conduct awareness programs for all staff on standards of academic honesty and integrity of the college and the importance of being a role model to students.</td>
<td>HoD/HoC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Train staff on the use of plagiarism detection software.</td>
<td>HoD/HoC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Conduct a test on their academic work (e.g., Course Handouts, Seminar Papers, PowerPoint</td>
<td>Concerned Staff Member</td>
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</table>
Presentations, Projects, etc.) for plagiarism using the software.

Submit a signed declaration using the Staff Declaration Form and test report along with the original work to the HOD/HOC.

Verify the originality of work submitted

Concerned Staff Member

HoD/HoC

B. HANDLING VIOLATIONS

Inform staff in writing using the Staff Plagiarism Notice Form, when plagiarism is detected.

Report the case through the proper channel for further actions.

Implement the action approved by the College Council.

HoD/HoC

Investigation Committee

Disciplinary Committee

C. SANCTIONS

Internal Work/Output:

First offense: Written Warning and revise the work

Second offense: Dismissal from the college

External Work/Output: Dismissal from the college

Note: A staff member is given a chance to lodge his/her appeal against the sanctions to the Dean.

Source: Plagiarism Policy, v2.2

6. GFP Assessment and Feedback System

During the learning process, students undergo formative and summative assessments and feedback is provided to improve students’ performance to achieve their goals.

- Formative assessments include, but are not limited to, student portfolios, in-class participation, in-class writing assessments, assignments, book/film reviews, presentations and laboratory exercises, projects, and progress tests. The details of formative assessment per Level are described in the Continuous Assessment Guidelines.

- Summative assessment papers are prepared by the Examination Committee. The set of procedures for exam papers preparation is described in Figure 9. This is supervised by the HoS-CTM in coordination with the Examination Committee.

- Examinations are conducted in a fair and conducive manner. A set of exam and invigilation guidelines and procedures are disseminated to staff before the scheduled exams.
After the exams, the marking of exam papers immediately takes place.

Figure 7: Exam Preparation and Moderation Flow Chart

Source: GFP Exam Writing and Moderation Procedures
7. Marking Procedures

The following are adhered to ensure systematic, fair, and transparent marking of exam papers:

- Markers are to arrive at the deputed hall 10 minutes prior to the scheduled time.
- Exam papers are centrally marked according to the assessment criteria.
- The table head explains the rubrics and distributes two exams randomly for calibration to each marker to make them aware of the band score.
- The exam scripts are serialized according to the names on the score sheet in red by the first marker.
- The second marker checks the accuracy of the first marking using a blue pen.
- A third marking is done if there is a difference of 30% and above between the marks awarded by the 1st and 2nd marker.
- The final mark will be the marks awarded by the 3rd marker and the mark closer to it, awarded by the 1st or 2nd marker.

Details on examinations and exam writing and invigilation are presented in the Examination Procedures and Exam Writing and Invigilation Procedures.

8. GFP Assessment Scheme

The English Language Centre applies the following assessment system for the General Foundation Program.

Table 2: GFP Assessment Outline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT (50%)</th>
<th>Level Exit Exam (50%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PT (30%)</td>
<td>COMPONENT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>Writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.33%</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening</td>
<td>Listening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.33%</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>Reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.33%</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Speaking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To pass a level, a student must pass the Level Exit Exam (LEE) and achieve an accumulative mark of 50%.
9. Feedback on Student Assessment

Feedback is generally given to bridge the gap between the learners’ on-going performance and the attainment of the desired goal. Hence, the ELC ensures that students are given timely and meaningful feedback. Specifically, students are given quantitative and qualitative feedback:

- To help them understand the course being assessed; and
- To provide them with guidance to improve their learning to achieve target outcomes.

Assessment criteria, rubrics, and marking symbols are explained to the students at the beginning of each academic year and their understanding of which is reinforced throughout their learning process.

10. Program Evaluation

The GFP development and review adheres to the provisions in the *Curriculum Development & Review Framework, v4*. This document contains the responsibilities, processes, timeframes, and areas to be considered in developing and reviewing a curriculum. Figure 10 illustrates the curriculum development and review cycle.

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**Figure 10: Curriculum Development and Review Cycle**

*Source: Curriculum Development & Review Framework, v4*

The implementation of GFP-English is evaluated through the following and involves relevant stakeholders in order to meet the expectations and changing demands of the local and national job market:
1. Course Evaluation
2. Program Evaluation (survey)
3. Program Evaluation (Interview)
4. Program Evaluation (Focus Group Discussion)

**11. Post-Foundation Program – English**

The PFP-English is a program managed by the ELC. The following are the courses offered in this Program:

- Technical Writing 1
- Technical Writing 2
- Technical Communication
- Public Speaking

These courses, and all their components, are included in the curriculum of the specialization programs offered in the university.

**D. Research and Consultancy**

The English Language Centre has a Research and Consultancy Team (RCT) that is responsible for the centre’s research and consultancy activities. These activities are anchored on its institutional mission and vision to provide a high-quality learning, training, and research climate whereby administrators, teachers, students, and staff actively engage in research activities to contribute to knowledge in local and international settings.

1. **Research Policy**

The Research Policy serves as a guide in developing the centre’s research activities. It aims to promote a viable research environment where staff and students’ research capabilities are honed for them to contribute to the improvement of the system. It addresses all the components of research as required in the Institutional Standards Assessment (ISA). The roles and responsibilities of the university authorities, the ELCC, and the Research and Consultancy Team are outlined in the policy.

2. **Research Agenda**

The research agenda outlines the priorities of research in the ELC. It is aligned with the national research agenda and the identified priorities of the centre. These priorities are developed according to the outcomes of the training needs analysis, staff appraisal, brainstorming sessions, and the performance of students. It corresponds with the general and specific areas of interests
of staff and students in the following components: pedagogy, improving students’ performance, staff development, and contributing to the national economy. Research activities are formally endorsed, approved, resourced, monitored, and undertaken following the university Research Policy.

3. Research Publication

The ELC RCT promotes the production and publication of research among the administration, staff, and students in areas of their own interest or of specific concern to the centre or university. Its main thrust and end-goal is to publish these research projects in high impact journals to create awareness which benefits all stakeholders.
V. **Student Support Services**

The centre provides several student support services as reflected in Section 8 of the Quality Assurance Manual. The ELC administration and the teachers must introduce these services to the students for information and guidance.

**A. College Management Information System (CIMS)**

The CIMS forms the inevitable digital platform that provides information about staff and students. It is managed by the Ministry of Labor. Staff can access the portal by logging in with their civil ID and password, choosing either the English or the Arabic language option. Teachers can do multiple tasks through the CIMS such as register and view student attendance details, enter student marks, choose student skill courses, enter English test marks, access timetables for staff, students and department courses, and check IELTS marks. Moreover, they can also check the student list of a particular section and access the student marks page by clicking on the course number and section number. Additionally, the teachers can check the student profile (student name, student number, national ID, gender, student mobile number, wilayat etc.) by entering student details.

**B. Student Induction Policy**

The Student Induction Policy aims at creating an awareness in new intakes of students about policies, procedures, and student support services. This activity is conducted on both college-based and centre-based programs. The Assistant Dean for Student Affairs spearheads the college-based program, while the ELCC, in coordination with the Student Guidance Committee, lead the centre-based program. This program is conducted on the first week of the semester before the commencement of regular classes. To intensify the awareness program, teachers also conduct an orientation session during the first session of classes. The program covers the class rules, attendance policy, plagiarism policy, discipline, and assessment scheme.

**C. Academic Support Services**

The Academic Support Services refers to the academic services provided by the ELC to the students for tutorial and language enrichment. It complements the achievement of the program learning outcomes for students to progress to a higher level of study. This is facilitated by teachers during their designated office hours.
D. Academic Advising

The centre employs an academic advising approach called the Academic Support Program (ASP). It is a process by which every student (advisee) in the university is given tutorial or enrichment activities by the teacher (advisor) to reach the educational goals of the centre. Teachers must inform the students about the ASP by using the Student Tutorial Management and Registration (STMR) and AdTrac systems to make appointments. Classes are to be conducted based on the appointment and the needs of the student. Students also receive feedback at the end of each sessions to know their performance.

Below is the flow chart that illustrates the ASP or Academic Advising undertaken in the ELC.

![Flow Chart](image-url)

**Figure 11: ELC Academic Advising Flow Chart**

*Source: Academic Support Program Guidelines, v1.5*
E. Self-Access Centre (SAC)
This is a place where students are free to access, choose, and use academic resources according to their individual needs and interests. Students work independently to improve their English language proficiency.

Source: GFP Student Handbook, AY 2020-2022

F. Writing Centre
The Writing Centre aims to improve the academic writing of ELC students. It is open based on timetables that are prepared every semester. The timetables of participating teachers are shown in the Student Tutorial Management and Registration (STMR) system which is located on the university website and where students register. The registration serves as an appointment which must be done a day before the actual session. If the chosen teacher is not available, students can request another teacher using the STMR. Drop-in appointments are also possible on a first-come, first-served basis should the counselor be free. Students are required to bring their assignments or discuss general concerns with the chosen teacher. Students give their feedback using the prescribed tool after the tutorial session for the centre to improve the system.


G. Counseling Program
Counseling and academic advice help students to achieve social and educational stability in the college. Teachers are part of the counseling process on issues within their level. If not resolved, they must report any student's misbehavior in class to the Head of Counseling and Graduate Follow-Up for counseling purposes as per Article 6C of the CoT Bylaws.

H. Student Tutorial Management and Registration
The Students' Tutorial Management & Registration (STMR) system facilitates and manages tutorial registration and schedules of staff and students which aims to support tutorial and enrichment sessions for the improvement of students' quality of learning. It is the responsibility of the teacher to inform students that the use of STMR is necessary for students to avail the services of the ASP and the Writing Centre. Students can select multiple tutorial sessions based on their needs and available schedule. The system is updated every semester to help and guide students to find special courses offered by the ELC.
I. English Society

Extracurricular activities empower students in terms of lifelong skills and help them gain vital experience that guides them on their educational journey. The English Society is managed by the HoS for ELP in coordination with members of the English Society composed of ELC teachers and selected students. It gives students varied opportunities to get essential training to become responsible and communicative team players as well as critical thinkers. Extracurricular activities also help students to learn cooperation, teamwork, and time management. Additionally, these activities develop student’s ability to leave their comfort zones, express themselves confidently, and become aware of global issues. These activities include peer-tutorial activities, seminar-workshops on related areas, speech contests, spelling and vocabulary development, film viewing, story-telling, and open-day related activities.

J. Student Grievance

The centre provides a resolution to all student grievances in a fair, sensitive, and timely manner. It is always committed to protecting the rights of every student in the university. It offers an open-door policy for student grievances; be it academic or non-academic. Teachers may receive any student-related grievance and resolve the issue at their level. If not resolved, teachers may elevate the issue to a higher level. Additionally, teachers are to advise students to report their grievances through the Student Support System (SSS) so that appropriate action can be taken. The SSS is located at the Student Portal of the university website.
VI. Staff Support Services

A. Staff Induction Program

The staff induction program provides an appropriate induction to newly recruited staff using the Staff Induction Activity Form (See the Staff Induction Activities). It helps them adjust to the system with the assistance of the Human Resource Department, the ELC Staff Induction Team, the assigned mentor, and the buddy. Following the approved action plan, the induction activities are implemented, monitored, and evaluated.

B. Teacher’s Responsibilities

The duties and tasks of the lecturer are listed below based on Articles 25 (A) and 92 of the CoT bylaws.

1. Teaching the assigned courses, preparing related material, and keeping a file for each course.
2. Supervising and counseling students on theoretical and practical activities.
3. Keeping records of the students’ results, activities, and attendance.
4. Writing exam papers and quizzes, conducting examinations, carrying out the necessary assessment, and reviewing results in compliance with the bylaws and the prevailing college regulations and instructions.
5. Offering academic counseling and career advice to students.
6. Supervising the on-the-job training of students, providing assistance to the supervisors of the industrial sector in charge of the college students during their training, and presenting reports on the students’ progress to the concerned heads.
7. Presenting a report for every semester's activities and suggesting development to the concerned heads.
8. Carrying out any other tasks assigned by the concerned heads of centre, department, or section.

C. Code of Conduct

For any educational institution, the most important pillars are staff members. The character of individual teachers will play a large role in determining student success. It is the prime responsibility of teachers to inculcate knowledge in their students. All staff members must be
kind, patient, and fair with the students. Staff members should also actively participate in the activities. He/She shall especially:

- Perform his work with accuracy and integrity.
- Keep the dignity of the job and behave properly.
- Respect the timings of his/her work and dedicate such time for performing the duties according to the organization rules.
- Follow all the instructions issued with accuracy and integrity in accordance with applicable laws, regulations, and systems.
- Support the values of accuracy, fairness, and honesty.
- Not compromise on quality.
- Keep academic integrity in all activities.
- Maintain the academic and professional environment, with respect to staff and students.
- Observe Islamic culture and its core elements in all college activities (Bylaws 92.1).
- Respect the proceedings of the holy month of Ramadan and refrain from activities such as eating and drinking while at the college or in public view off-campus.
- Deal with colleagues and students with professionalism and respect.
- Be aware of the college bylaws and follow them.
- Do not give private lessons whether paid or not.
- Conduct office hours to guide students and support them academically.
- Avoid smoking, which is strictly prohibited on the college campus.
- Use course materials, photos, and videos acceptable in Islamic culture.
- Take all necessary precautions to avoid the leakage and loss of exam questions.
- Be accurate, fair, and conscientious when marking exam papers and entering the marks.
- Use the college resources and facilities effectively for the benefit of students and staff only. Inappropriate use of the resources and facilities is not acceptable.
- Refrain from accepting gifts or donations.
- Foster a spirit of cooperation among faculty members.
- Show a high level of ethics consistent with the work ethic of the college.
- Keep a proper and professional distance between himself/herself and the students.
• greet students with a handshake (in the case of the same gender only). No other form of physical greetings can be practiced between staff and students.

D. Faculty Dress code

Oman, as a Muslim society, has a conservative approach to dress code in public. Lecturers should dress professionally at college. The following dress code is required:

• Male Omani staff should wear the national dress, the white dishdasha, and turban.
• Male expatriate staff members should wear short or long-sleeved shirts.
• Tattoos must be covered. Jeans are not acceptable. Black or brown shoes are essential.
• Jackets are optional.
• Females should wear a full-length dress. Tops should be non-revealing; they should have a high neckline and sleeves which cover the arms to the elbows.
• Lab/Workshop Technicians must always wear their lab coat during class hours

E. Human Resource Services

The Human Resource department records and monitors the attendance of employees working in the college via the Biometric-Based Attendance Monitoring System (BBAMS). The recording and monitoring of attendance include the absences (with or without official leave), taking Emergency, Sick Leave and Personal Business Leave (PBL). These services also include the consolidation and prioritization of training needs based on the recommendations of the staff appraisal (see Staff Appraisal below).

F. Staff Professional Development

Staff professional development ensures that teaching & non-teaching staff will be given training and development opportunities to enhance their professional competencies. The training and developmental activities are based on the Training Needs Analysis and the Staff Appraisal System. Other training needs may be provided based on the current demand such as the emergent introduction of policies and other best practices. All staff development activities are implemented by the centre in coordination with the Staff Development Committee.
G. Class Observation

Class observations are meant to enhance the quality of teaching to improve students’ learning. It applies to all teaching staff members working in the university. It is an integral part of quality assurance and continuous quality improvement in teaching and learning that can be formative and/or evaluative. The input received can be useful for planning, organizing, and conducting various professional development activities for the staff. This is also one of the components in the Staff Appraisal System. All staff under probation will receive a class observation. Regular teachers will receive a class observation once every two years. Teachers with low performance or score with less than 3.5 or those subject to disciplinary procedures should be visited once every semester. (See Class Observation Policy on the University Website Policy Portal.)

H. Staff Appraisal

The Staff Appraisal System ensures that the performance of all university staff is assessed through a systematic appraisal process at the end of the year. This is to examine whether the employees are working efficiently and effectively to achieve the objectives of the organization or not.

There are separate criteria for the appraisal of academic and non-academic staff. The appraisal of lecturers comprises of the following five sections: Self-Assessment, Students’ Feedback on Teaching and Learning, Teaching and Administrative Duties, Committee Work, and Personal Attributes. While the appraisals of non-teaching staff comprise of the following section: Self-Assessment, Administrative Duties, Committee Work, and Personal Attributes. The Heads of Sections are assessed by staff and the Head of the Centre on the basis of performance of administrative duties, personal attributes and conduct, leadership skills, and so on. The HoC is evaluated by the University Dean.

I. Organizational Climate

The centre promotes a desirable work environment where staff share a positive attitude and work collaboratively. It also aims to promote an atmosphere where each member of staff is motivated to discharge his/her responsibilities toward the promotion of academic excellence. To achieve this intention, the centre provides relative policies, facilities, and services such as those stipulated below.
J. Staff Award/s

The ELC recognizes staff exemplary performance every academic year. Three different awards can be bestowed upon any deserving staff member, namely: Staff of the Month, Staff of the Year, and the Distinguished Research Award. Based on the Staff Award Guidelines (version 1.1), the ELCC chooses one member of staff to be awarded as the Staff of the Month every month and selects two best staff members as Staff of the Year awardees. The Distinguished Research Award shall be chosen based on the Distinguished Research Award Guidelines. Awardees are posted on the university website and in the centre bulletin. They also receive certificates of recognition and a token during the awarding ceremonies.

K. ELC Canteen

The ELC Canteen has two sections- the Boys Canteen and Girls Canteen. These canteens are situated beside the ELC Building which can be easily accessed by staff to get refreshments or take breakfast and/or lunch. Varied foods are served from 7:00 am to 5:00 pm.

L. University Clinic

This facility provides services to staff such as an initial consultation, first aid, and minor health problems. Members of staff can directly access such services, with the assistance of university nurses between 7:00 am and 3:00 pm. A student can also be referred to this clinic for any appropriate medical attention.

M. University Mosques

The University Mosques provides all Muslim staff with a place to express their worship of Allah. For males, there is a Mosque situated near the staff accommodation and there is also a room on the roof deck of the ELC Building. For females, ELC 225 serves as their place for worship.

N. ELC Staff Lounge

This is a place where all ELC staff can take breakfast, snacks, or lunch individually or in a group. This can also be a place for potlucks which are organized by Staff Club members. Academic group conversations among a small group of staff can also be conducted in this room.
O. University Sports Facilities

These facilities help to develop sportsmanship. The Faculty Club room is used to conduct various in-door sports activities such as Chess, Billiards, Table tennis, Carom, and Darts among others. A football field is also provided for Cricket and Football games. A Basketball court is provided at the back of the ELC Building and the University Volleyball Court can be used by staff which is situated at the front-yard of the university.

P. Faculty Club

The Faculty Club is situated near the Quality assurance Department Building. It is used to conduct any social activity designed by the centre or the university (See University Sport Facilities for more details.)

Q. University Transportation

The university provides vehicles for free transportation used during official trips such as seminars, workshops, meetings, and other staff-related activities. Members of staff can book cars through the university e-services channel.

R. ELC Car Parks

The centre has a wide car park area which can be used by any ELC staff who has a private car. Members of staff must inform the administration through the ELC Secretary about his/her intention to get a parking slot. He/she must also apply for the procurement of the electronic card so that his/her car can enter the university campus.

S. Staff Grievance

The Staff grievance procedure is meant to resolve staff grievances in a fair, legal, sensitive and timely way. UTAS-Ibra will always be committed to protect the rights of each staff member whether they are a complainant or a respondent. Thus, staff are given the opportunity to submit their grievances to their immediate supervisor using the grievance form which is available at the ELC Secretary. Staff are then requested to wait 5 working days after the processing of the complaint. If unresolved, staff can elevate the issue to the next higher authority as provided in Sections 6.1.1-6.1.11 of the Staff Grievance Policy.
T. Staff Club

The Staff Club organizes activities and events for the ELC staff in order to offer opportunities for social interactions which will help ELC staff settle in Ibra and build friendly relationships within the workplace. These events and activities are planned after conducting surveys to find out which type of activities staff prefer. These activities include outdoor recreation trips, day trips, potlucks, and sports days. Activities can also be held to celebrate events such as Oman Teacher’s Day, Oman National Day and Iftar Dinner, etc. (See Staff Club action plan for the detailed activities.)

U. Tips and Expectations

1. Learn students’ names as soon as possible. Calling students by their names is the first step for classroom management.
2. Avoid discussing culturally sensitive issues in class.
3. Develop a good, professional rapport with students. However, keep a reasonable distance between you and the students.
4. Treat both genders equally.
5. Avoid exchanging or giving precious and expensive gifts to students.
6. Avoid sharing your personal phone number or email address with the students.
7. Do not compel a female student to stand up and read a passage, write on the board or do role-plays if she is reluctant to do it (unless it is an assessed oral presentation/project).
8. Try to identify the possible troublemakers after a couple of classes so that you can fix their seating plan randomly in your class to avoid any unexpected disorder.
9. Do not respond to any irrelevant questions raised by students in the class. They do it only to annoy you. Also, do not entertain small talk during lessons.
10. Keep students who misbehave focused by giving them hand-outs to distribute or let them write something on the board for the whole class. That makes them feel responsible. Sometimes treating them with respect can change the situation.
VII. References

- ASP Guidelines, v1.5
- Class Observation Policy, v2.0
- Common English Language Curriculum, v4.0
- Common GFP Structure, v1.0
- Common Pedagogical Framework, v1.5
- CoTs Bylaws
- Curriculum Development and Review Framework, v4.0
- Description of ELC Committees, AY 2020-2021
- Distinguished Research Award Guidelines, v1.0
- ELC Committees Terms of Reference, AY 2020-2021
- GFP Exam Writing and Moderation Procedures, v0.4
- ICT Policy and Procedures Management Framework, v3.0
- ICT Quality Assurance Manual, v7.2
- ICT Risk Management Framework, v1.0
- ICT Strategic Plan 2019-2024
- Oman Academic Standards for General Foundation Programs
- Plagiarism Policy, v2.2
- Planning Mechanism, v1.0
- Staff Awards Guidelines, v1.1
- Staff Induction Activities Form
- Writing-Centre: Structure-Guidelines
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