

Quality and Standards Escalation Protocol

1. Context

1. The Metanoia Institute has introduced this protocol as an enhancement to the internal processes for the identification and resolution of matters that have the potential to effect the security of academic standards and / or the quality of the student experience.
2. Through the normal operation of our governance structure, issues may be (and are) addressed through reporting directly to the relevant committee / board or via one of the annual and periodic reporting mechanisms such as the module- and programme-level annual reflections and evaluations, institutional-level monitoring processes and at programme revalidation.
3. This protocol permits the raising of an issue (a risk or potential risk) that the reporter judges should not wait until the next reporting opportunity at a local or institutional level. It allows for the reporter – a member of Institute staff or another stakeholder, including externals with whom the Institute works in partnership, for example within the professional practice setting – to identify and propose actions to resolve the issue; however, resolution identification is not required for a report to be made.
4. The completed form (template provided at 3., below) will be received by the Institute's Quality Office and will, if it meets certain criteria, be escalated to the Academic Registrar for consideration and, as appropriate, follow-up. The outcome will be reported to the next meeting of Education Committee in summary form.

1.1 Students

1. Students may raise concerns about academic standards and / or quality at Metanoia by
 - a. approaching a member of their programme team or another member of teaching staff or the Administration (Professional Services) team or
 - b. by activating the Institute's [Complaints Procedure](#)¹Nevertheless, the Escalation Protocol may be initiated by a student or group of students by agreement with the Institute where it is judged to be more appropriate than the triggering of the complaints procedure. A member of Institute staff would act for the student(s) in the submission of the report form (template below).

¹ If the issue remains unresolved to the complainant's satisfaction, it can be escalated to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA).

Note: if a student or group of students initiate(s) the protocol, they may be asked to provide additional information and / or / supporting evidence and may be invited for interview / discussion. At the conclusion of the matter reported, the relevant student(s) will be informed of the outcome and advised of any actions taken or planned in response to the matter's investigation.

2. Escalation Procedure

- I. The member of Institute staff or other stakeholder (including external individuals or organisations) reporting a risk or potential risk to academic standards and/or the student experience (quality) is asked to complete **Section 1** of the form and submit it via email to the address shown at the top of the form. Confirmation of receipt will be provided. The reporter may seek advice (a professional judgement) from a senior member of the Institute's staff, e.g., the Institute's Registrar or Quality and Standards Support Manager, prior to submitting the form concerning the level of risk (or potential risk) presented by the issue identified.
- II. On receipt of the completed form, the Quality Office will assess the report form, complete **Section 2** and forward it to the Academic Registrar for consideration within three working days (more immediately if the risk is judged to be urgent).
- III. The Academic Registrar will consider the report and may seek further information, either from the reporter or from another source (or both). Additionally, other senior colleagues in the Institute may be consulted. The Academic Registrar (or nominee) will complete **Section 3** of the report form and return it to the Quality team, who will record the outcome for reporting to the next meeting of Education Committee (EC).
- IV. The report's submitter will then be advised by the Quality team of the outcome of the consideration. The process will normally be completed within two weeks (14 days); however, more time may be needed to ensure a proper investigation of the matter raised. The reporter will be kept informed of any delays in the process.
- V. A compilation report of escalations and their outcomes will be reported to the next meeting of Education Committee and included in the Institute's Annual Monitoring Report (AMR), which allows for the identification of improvements and / or enhancements emanating from the protocol process during the relevant academic cycle

REPORTING FORM

This form is for use by a staff member or other stakeholder who recognises that a matter in relation to quality and standards requires urgent attention, one that will not wait for it to be addressed through the annual / periodic reporting or other processes that operate through the Institute's governance structure. A student or group of students may initiate the process (see 1.1 Students, above).

See Annex 1 for guidance on the criteria for escalation

This form should not be used unless the normal routes of raising and addressing matters are judged to be insufficiently expeditious. If unsure, the Quality Office can provide advice.

A form with **Section 1** (only) completed should be emailed to (quality@metanoia.ac.uk).

Section 1 – to be completed by the reporter Please provide a summary description of the issue(s) identified	Staff member reporting (name and post)	Submission to Quality Office (date)	List of any remedial action(s) identified / proposed
Section 2 – to be completed by the receiving office Issue development/ additional information	Receiving administrator (name and post)	Date of the submission's assessment	Initial findings (if any); Confirmation of receipt acknowledged. Further action required?
Section 3 – to be completed by a the Academic Registrar (or nominee) Conclusion of consideration of the escalated issue	Staff member(s) name and post – consulted (if any)	Date of the submission's assessment	Details of findings and proposed action(s) and any additional recommendations. Confirmation of which meeting of Education Committee is to receive outcome summary.

ANNEX 1: Guidance on Criteria for Escalation

The Institute operates a functionally effective academic governance structure through which the identification of matters that present a threat or potential threat to academic standards and / or quality may be addressed. Nevertheless, there may be occasions when an issue is identified that, in the judgement of a member of staff or other person connected to the Institute, requires more immediate attention (also, see *1.1 Students in Context* section). It should not be used where the normal reporting or feedback mechanisms would provide a more appropriate route and timescale for consideration and action.

Examples of when this protocol should be initiated

1. As a result of the Institute's rules not being followed, the security of an examination paper has been compromised, for example made available online in error;
2. An External Examiner (EE) has resigned with immediate effect and the relevant programme is without an EE mid-cycle.
3. Incorrect information about a module's learning outcomes has been published in a Student Handbook, which has been distributed to the student cohort.
4. It has come to light, following the event, that an external panel member for a programme revalidation did not declare a conflict of interest that would have disbarred the candidate from participating in the process.
5. Due to staff turnover and post vacancies, students have not been able to access the welfare support services to which they are entitled for an extended period

VERSION CONTROL

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