L.N. 378 of 2010

EDUCATION ACT
(CAP. 327)

STATUTE FOR THE INSTITUTE OF EARTH SYSTEMS

IN EXERCISE of the powers conferred upon him by articles 74(5) and 75(6) of the Education Act, the Chancellor of the University of Malta has promulgated the following statute made by the Council of the University of Malta in virtue of the powers conferred upon it by articles 72(h), 75(2) and 77(c) of the said Act.

Citation

This statute may be cited as the Statute for the Institute of Earth Systems.

STATUTE FOR THE INSTITUTE OF EARTH SYSTEMS

Definition and Interpretation

1. In this Statute, unless the context otherwise requires:

"Earth Systems" shall refer to a concept which goes a step beyond traditional disciplinary investigation, taking a wider perspective of the Earth's dynamic systems. Such notion acknowledges the interconnectedness of abiotic and biotic components, as well as the need for sound planning and integrated resources management. Critical to a 'systems' approach is the inclusion of people and their environment. Earth systems science thus recognizes the link and interaction between the geo-sciences, evolutionary processes and ecology, and the human dimension (broadly the social, economic, cultural and technological elements), through environmental management;

"the Board" shall mean the Board of the Institute;

"the Centre" shall mean the Euro-Mediterranean Centre on Insular Coastal Dynamics;

"the Institute" shall mean the Institute of Earth Systems.

Establishment

2. The Institute of Earth Systems is hereby established as an institution within the University of Malta.

Objectives and functions

3. The aims of the Institute shall be:

(a) to promote an interdisciplinary and integrated approach to all environmental aspects, and address societal issues within an environmental perspective; and

(b) to promote research and training on all aspects of the human and physical environment, including the rural sciences, with particular reference to:

(i) global questions relating to the management of the environment, to the affirmation and protection of the rights thereto, including those of future generations;

(ii) regional (e.g. Mediterranean) issues relating to the environment, including conservation (loss of biodiversity in its various forms and root causes of related problems, notably habitat degradation and loss) and rural science;

(iii) training of target groups (including environmental planners, environmental managers, agrologists, architects, engineers, economists, journalists and lawyers) on environmental issues pertaining, in particular, to their respective areas;

(iv) the running of undergraduate and postgraduate programmes, as well as short intensive specialised courses, where appropriate, in collaboration with other institutions, in the various fields of earth systems;

(v) issues surrounding health and sustainable land/food systems;

(vi) issues concerning the responsible use of finite land and water resources;

(vii) multi-scale (molecular to global) systems in support of a bio-based economy;

(viii) the specific needs of Maltese agricultural practices;

(ix) the need to pioneer best available technologies for Maltese agriculture;

(x) gathering and disseminating information and documentation on the natural, semi-natural and human environment;

(xi) implementation of projects falling within the remit of the Institute.

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4. The Institute shall cooperate with the Government of Malta and relevant authorities/agencies and advise, if required, on matters relating to the environment, in its widest sense. The Institute shall also advise on the efficient use of local agricultural resources and provide professional advisory services to the local farming community. The Institute, in collaboration with other institutions, may set up under its remit other sub-units dealing with specialized aspects of the environment, with the approval of Senate and Council.

5. The Institute shall be responsible for the overall administration of the Centre as detailed in Appendix I.

Governance

6. The Institute shall be governed by a Board that shall consist of the following:

(i) Chairman: the Rector of the University or his delegate
(ii) Vice-Chairman: the Director of the Institute;
(iii) a person appointed by the Council of the University;
(iv) a person appointed by the Senate of the University;
(v) the Co-ordinators of the Divisions;
(vi) the Head of the Euro-Mediterranean Centre on Insular Coastal Dynamics;
(vii) not more than two representatives of the academic staff lecturing or conducting research within the Institute;
(viii) not more than two representatives of the students registered with the Institute; and
(ix) up to four scholars of repute to be recommended by the Board and approved by Senate.

The Registrar or his delegate shall act as Secretary to the Board.

7. All members of the Board, other than those appointed *ex officio*, shall be appointed for a period of one year, renewable for up to four years. A retiring member shall be eligible for re-appointment.

8. The functions of the Board shall be:

(a) to govern the affairs of the Institute, subject to the provisions of this statute and of such regulations, policies or directions as may from time to time be approved by the Council and the Senate;

(b) to formulate the policy of the Institute, to supervise its activities and administration, and without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing, the Board may:

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(i) approve business plans and annual estimates of revenue and expenditure of the Institute for consideration and approval by the Council;

(ii) with the written concurrence of the Rector enter into agreements with third parties for funding of the Institute or of particular activities;

(iii) publish an annual report;

(iv) enrol the Institute in associations or institutions sharing its aims and interests;

(v) propose Regulations and Bye-Laws to the Senate;

(vi) request staff members of the Institute to produce reports on academic matters, including the curricula of courses of study, qualifications for admission to courses, examinations and certificates of attendance or qualification, as well as project proposals for external funding, and scientific publications;

(vii) recommend to the Council the creation or abolition of academic and non-academic posts in the Institute;

(viii) propose for approval to the Senate, Boards of Studies and Examiners for undergraduate and postgraduate courses.

Appointment of Director, Co-ordinators and Staff

9. The Institute shall have a Director, Co-ordinators and staff as follows:

(a) the Director of the Institute shall be appointed from among the Co-ordinators of the Institute by the Council for a duration of one year, with the possibility of renewal annually subject to established performance criteria, the needs of the Institute and the needs of the University, for a total period not exceeding four (4) years;

(b) the Co-ordinators of the Divisions shall be appointed by Council after consultation with the academic members of the Division for a duration of one year, with the possibility of renewal annually subject to established performance criteria, the needs of the Institute and the needs of the University, for a total period not exceeding four (4) years; and

(c) the staff of the Institute shall be appointed by the University according to usual practice.

Duties of the Director

10. The duties of the Vice-Chairman/Director of the Institute shall include:

(a) promoting the development and implementation of the Institute's curricula and research programmes;

(b) compiling and submitting to the Registrar of the University by not later than January of each academic year, an updated comprehensive prospectus of the content descriptions of all current and projected study-units offered by members of the Institute as per guidelines established by the Programme Validation Committee;

(c) ensuring that the study-units offered by the staff members of the Institute are delivered in accordance with the advertised programme of studies; the Director of the Institute must ensure that lecturing staff under his remit deliver all lectures, seminars, tutorials and laboratory sessions assigned to them respectively, at the time and venue advertised in the official timetable, and that any deviations thereof are formally registered, and the students duly notified in good time;

(d) delivering and implementing the strategic plan of the Institute;

(e) administering the Institute in full consultation with the members; monitoring and approving requests for leave of absence of members of the Institute; the Director of the Institute is expected to maintain records of all leave taken by members and to pass on these records to the Director of Human Resources Management and Development upon request;

(f) promoting students' academic and personal welfare, providing first-line support to students with any difficulties they may encounter during their studies related to the activities of the Institute;

(g) monitoring the running of tests and examinations in the Institute and ensuring that all assessment and examination results are submitted to the Registrar's office as follows:

- January session – by the end of March;
- May/June session – final year results by not later than two working days prior to the final year degree classification board but in any case not later than end of July, other results as early as possible but not later than the end of July;
- September session – by the end of September.

(h) encouraging and facilitating co-operation with other universities and other institutions;

(i) chairing meetings of the Board in the absence and with the permission of the Chairman;

(j) ensuring and facilitating the further development and training of academic and non-academic staff;

(k) participating at any meeting of the University congruent with the post;

(l) representing the Institute during official functions of the University;

(m) compiling and submitting to the Secretary of the University by the end of September of each academic year, an annual report outlining the activities of the Institute for the outgoing year, which should include, amongst others, information that may be requested by the Secretary: a comprehensive list of recent publications of all members of the Institute; a synopsis of all projects involving members of the Institute which are wholly or partially externally funded; a list of all conferences/seminars/meetings attended abroad by members of the Institute during term time; and an outline of the Institute's collaboration with third parties including local industry, Government or civil society at large;

(n) compiling and submitting to the Director of Finance of the University by not later than end of May of each academic year budgetary estimates for the following year including a manpower plan for the Institute, to cover the projected teaching, research and administration workload of the Institute, and based on the projected workload for each Resident Academic member of the Institute and Visiting Teaching Staff;

(o) monitoring the performance of the non-academic staff attached to the Institute;

(p) authorising the Institute's procurement of equipment; ensuring that the resources assigned to the Institute – whether human or other – are utilized fully and efficiently;

(q) performing other duties which may be assigned by the University from time to time.

11. The Director of the Institute moreover:

(a) is to report directly to the Chairman of the Board governing the Institute and shall collaborate with all senior administrative officers of the University;

(b) shall normally be a Resident Academic engaged with the University on a full-time basis for the duration of his tenure as Director of the Institute. If the Institute is engaged in undergraduate or postgraduate taught programmes of study then the Director of the Institute must be engaged with the University as a Resident Academic on a full-time basis;

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(c) should not be engaged in any other activity outside the University which may be in conflict with, or distract him from, his duties at the University;

(d) is expected to be present on campus or any designated University of Malta site at least during normal office hours from Monday to Friday throughout the year subject to the exigencies of an academic in accordance with the University's practices and needs and subject to normal leave entitlement and public holidays as provided for at law; should his absence be necessary and justified he must ensure that he is immediately contactable through the secretarial staff of the Institute;

(e) shall not give access to any information to any third party that is not associated with the University of Malta, about any work or data that relates to tasks conducted at the University of Malta without the prior approval of the University of Malta; all work carried out within the Institute must be treated according to Maltese data protection legislation;

(f) is to abide with the statutes, regulations and policies of the University of Malta, which are in force now or will become effective in the duration of his tenure.

Duties of the Co-ordinators of Divisions

12. The duties of the coordinator shall include:

(a) having regular meetings with members of the division, at least six during an academic year;

(b) directing the academic tasks and monitoring the curriculum development in his area in consultation with lecturers involved in the subject area;

(c) monitoring and ensuring that the overall academic development and the well being of the students and dealing with cases of indiscipline that may be brought to his attention;

(d) monitoring coursework and assessments in consultation with the respective lecturers teaching that subject area.

13. Coordinators are to report directly to the Director of the Institute and are also bound by the provisions of article 10 (c), (d), (e) and (f) above.

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The Divisions

14. The Institute shall have two Divisions:

(a) the Division of Environmental Management and Planning shall focus its efforts primarily, on the following subject areas: the science and management of earth systems; environmental planning (including coastal management); integrated resource management; social-ecological systems; conservation and protected area management; environmental assessment and policy; corporate environmental management; hazards assessment and risk management; landscape research (including landscape ecology and management); and environmental ethics, all under the over-arching theme of sustainable development;

(b) the Division of Rural Sciences and Food Systems shall focus its efforts primarily on the following subject areas: rural land resources; rural development; food systems; agro-ecosystems; and landscape architecture.

15. The divisions may offer any other area that may be recommended by the Board and approved by Council.

The Treasurer

16. The Director of Finance of the University shall be the Treasurer of the Institute.

International Scientific Advisory Committee

17. There shall be an International Scientific Advisory Committee composed of scholars of repute appointed by the Board.

Repeal

18. The Statute for the Institute of Agriculture published as Legal Notice 14 of 2010 and the Statute for the International Environment Institute published as Legal Notice 324 of 2009 are hereby repealed.

APPENDIX I

COUNCIL OF EUROPE SPECIALISED CENTRE

Article 1

Establishment, objectives and functions of the Centre

1. There is hereby established under the auspices of the Council of Europe and with the Agreement of the Government of Malta (hereinafter referred to as "The Government"), the Euro-Mediterranean Centre on Insular Coastal Dynamics (hereinafter referred to as "the Centre") at the Institute of Earth Systems (hereinafter referred to as "the Institute") within the University of Malta.

2. The Centre is set up at the Institute which shall be responsible for the overall administration of the Centre and for providing support and promotion on a European and International basis.

3. The Government shall nominate a Permanent Correspondent relating to the application of the Open Partial Agreement signed on 20th March, 1987 between the Council of Europe and the Government. All official representations between the Council of Europe and the Centre and vice-versa, are to take place through the Permanent Correspondent.

4. The objectives of the Centre, which is a non-profit organisation created within the framework of the above-mentioned agreement, shall include education, training and research on marine coastal dynamics and related hazards in the Mediterranean.

5. The Centre shall be able to raise funds for its operational needs from the local banks and other appropriate funding agencies.

6. The main functions of the Centre shall be:

   (a) promotion of research and training on socio, economic and environmental aspects of the marine and coastal environment with emphasis on climate change and related coastal impacts;

   (b) promotion of an interdisciplinary approach to integrated coastal management.

Article 2

Governance and organisation of the Centre

7. The Institute shall provide the Centre with adequate resources to allow it to carry out its functions. The Centre shall have:

   (i) a Head of the Centre appointed by Council for a duration of one year, with the possibility of renewal annually subject to established performance criteria, the needs of the Centre and the needs of the University, for a total period not exceeding four (4) years:

   (ii) administrative and research staff.

8. The overall governance of the Centre falls under the responsibility of the Board of the Institute. The Head of the Centre is to report directly to the Director of the Institute and shall be responsible for:

   (i) the academic programme and general running of the Centre;
   (ii) the direction and supervision of the activities and administration of the Centre;
   (iii) the planning of the programme of activities of the Centre in consultation with the Institute's Board and the Council of Europe;
   (iv) preparing the annual report of activities of the Centre and to submit it, together with the programme for the following year, to the Institute's Board and the Council of Europe.

9. Pursuant to paragraph 1 of this agreement, the Centre shall enjoy full fiscal exemption and any other similar facilitation which Government may wish to grant it.

Article 3

10. This Agreement may be modified by mutual accord in writing between the Council of Europe, the Government of Malta and the University of Malta and each party shall give full and sympathetic consideration to any request for such modifications.

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