



Sultanate of Oman

Ministry of Manpower

Directorate General of Technological Education

General Foundation Programme

Student Handbook

2018-2019

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1. Welcome message

Dear Students,

Welcome to the General foundation programme.

The success of the English Language Programme depends on your active participation. During the course of study, you will be expected to take an active part in the whole learning process. You are encouraged to seek knowledge actively or to use the acquired information in new situations. Also, you will be involved to extra-curricular activities during your study at the GFP to expand the benefit from the Foundation Programme. This will be a great help when you take up employment.

The Centre is open from Sunday to Thursday. It will be your responsibility to organize such periods to your best advantage using the Centre's educational premises. This will allow you to follow independent learning programmes and carry out homework and assignments.

This Handbook will serve as an introduction to the General Foundation Programme for this academic year. It contains details on the nature of the Programme, entry, structure, resources available, the assessment procedure, guidance and discipline, and other information you require during your course of study. You should read it carefully so that you are fully aware of the nature of the Programme and the college requirements you must fulfil, to complete the Programme successfully. The responsibility for a fruitful outcome lies with you.

2. Quality Assurance Committee

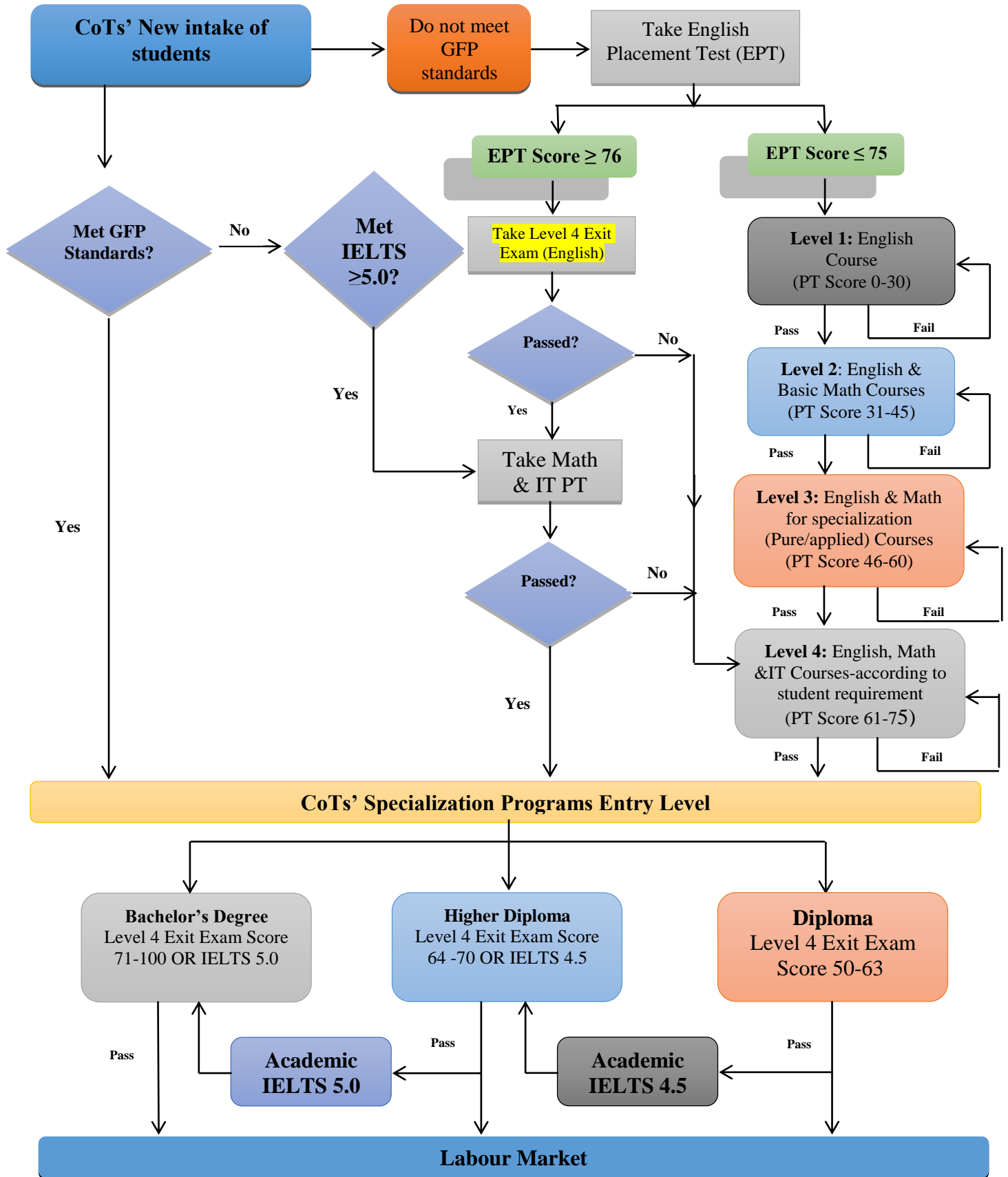
The English language centre's quality Assurance committee was instituted in 2000s and since then it has worked to ensure that GFP provides high standards of education and supports all the staff and students in meeting the required standards. The GFP Quality Assurance Committee is responsible for conducting objective examination activities evidence and operations of the Centre for the purpose of providing an independent assessment on them and ensures measures are taken for improvement. It covers student induction, attendance, conduct (behaviour), exams, academic performance, utilization of academic support services and other student related facilities, health and safety, club activities, competitions, implementation of student related policies, audits of student portfolios, and all the other student related activities.

The Quality Audit focuses on how well a higher education institution is doing by focusing on its strengths. It fulfils at least two purposes. First, it is a means by which the college is held accountable to society for its role in providing quality in higher education. Second, it helps focusing on opportunities for continuous quality improvement within the college. Thus, it can provide valuable information for the strategic planning process. You may visit the web site (www.oaaa.gov.om) or the college web site for further information on quality assurance.

3. Admission and Progression

All registered students are eligible to enter the General Foundation Programme. Their entry level depends on their linguistic ability. The in-house placement tests will determine the English language level, Math level and IT level of each student and his or her placement is decided accordingly. This means that not all students will be required to take the four levels. Some may progress through the Programme much faster than others depending on the results of the Placement Tests. (See Diagram 1)

Diagram 1:



3.1. Exemption:

Students can be exempted from the placement test and admitted to the specialization programmes, provided they produce evidence of:

- A score record of International Accredited Exams, i.e. Academic IELTS (at least Band 4.5) or its equivalent of TOEFL iBT. (See Table 1)
- Meeting IT & Maths Foundation Programme requirements.

Table 1:

Cases	English requirements	Math requirement	IT requirement	Specialization programme
Student A	IELTS Band 4.5	Basic & Pure/Applied Math*	IT course, IC3 or ICDL*	Higher diploma**
Student B	IELTS Band 5	Basic & Pure/Applied Math*	IT course, IC3 or ICDL*	Bachelor**

* The student must study math and IT courses in the Foundation Programme even if he/she brought IELTS/TOEFL iBT

** The student GPA should meet the post-foundation requirements. See page (6).

4. IELTS and TOEFL Criteria: Promotion to higher levels at the Colleges of Technology

The mechanism of promotion from the diploma level to the higher diploma level and the bachelor level is as follows:

Table (2)

Conditions for promotion	Specialization program	GPA	IELTS
Students interested in continuing their course of study after successfully completing their diploma level may proceed to the higher diploma level, provided that they achieved the required CGPA (2.5) and the required IELTS score or TOEFL (iBT Test)	Higher Diploma	2.5	4.5
Students interested in continuing their course of study after successfully completing their higher diploma level may proceed to the bachelor level, provided that they achieved the required CGPA (2.75) and the required IELTS or TOEFL (iBT Test) score	Bachelor	2.75	5

5. Programme Structure and Description

Four English language levels are offered and students are placed according to their linguistic abilities. In each level, students will study English Language and Study Skills as detailed in the Table (4) below:

Table (4)

COURSE	Level-1	Level-2	Level-3	Level-4
	No. of Hrs	No. of Hrs	No. of Hrs	No. of Hrs
Reading & Writing	10	10	10	8
Listening & Speaking	8	8	8	7
Projects & Presentation	**NA	**NA	**NA	3 (taught by reading and writing lecturer)
Total Hours	18	18	18	18

Math	**NA	4 Basic	4 Applied	4 Pure	4 (if students repeat basic, pure, applied, IT) *conditions on pages 11-12
			Business Students	Other specializations	
IT	**NA	**NA	4		4

****NA = Not Applicable**

Note:

- Students will have the chance to further their knowledge and improve their level through the resources available in the **Centre**. See page 15 for more information about these centres.
- The Programme is offered on a term basis. The academic calendar is divided into 3 terms. Students can refer to their Course Tutor for further details on the academic calendar of the Centre.

6. The Assessment System

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

Table (5) of FP Assessment Outline:

CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT (50%)		Level Exit Exam (50%)		
PT (30%)		COMPONENET	Percent	
Writing	10%	OTHER (20%)	Writing	12.5 %
Listening	10%		Listening	12.5 %
Reading	10%		Reading	12.5 %
			Oral	12.5 %

6.1 Pass/Fail Criteria:

- To pass a level, you must pass both the Level Exit Exam and the Continuous Assessment (CA). The pass grade is 50%.

(Accumulative Grade) = LEE (50) + CA (50) = (100). See Table (6) below.

Table (6)

	CA	LEE	Total	Final result
Student A	25	25	50	Pass
Student B	30	20*	50	Fail
Student C	20	30**	50	Pass

*Students should score 25 or above in the LEE to get a passing grade.

**Students' overall score should be at least 50 with meeting the condition of passing LEE.

6.2 Level 4 Assessment and Level Exit Score:

Students' total score of CA and LEE will allocate students in the next three programmes (Diploma, higher Diploma, or Bachelor degree). The scores are divided as shown below in Table (7):

Table (7)

Study Degree	Score
Diploma	50 - 63
Higher Diploma	64 - 70
Bachelor	71 - 100

6.3 Promotion from one level to another:

6.3.1 Stage 1:

In this stage students are distributed into their levels according to their score in the PT.

6.3.2 Stage 2:

The core tutor can nominate 1 or 2 students, according to their performance in a writing task given to them by their lecturer, to have the chance of being promoted to the next level. The core tutor will send an email to HoS CTM, so the nominated students will sit for the Level Exit Exam of their current level. See Table (8) below.

Table (8)

Case	Current level	Promotion exam	Next level if students pass
Student A	Level 1	Level 1 Exit Exam	Level 2*
Student B	Level 2	Level 2 Exit Exam	Level 3*
Student C	Level 3	Level 3 Exit Exam	Level 4*

* If the student passes the Level Exit Exam.

* Level promotion is not applicable to level 4 students.

6.4. Grading System

The Level Accumulative Grade is represented as a letter grade, and the results of each level are announced accordingly. Table (9) reflects the Level Accumulative Grade:

Table (9)

Letter Grade	Scale
A+	>= 95 %
A	90 – 94 %
A-	85 – 89 %
B+	80 – 84 %
B	75 – 79 %
B-	70 – 74 %
C+	65 – 69 %
C	60 – 64 %
D+	55 – 59 %
D	50 – 54 %
F (Fail)	< 50 %

The assessment process incorporates a variety of assessment methods. All language skills are assessed through formative and summative assessment.

7. Math and IT in the Foundation Programme

1. New intake students must sit for Math and IT placement tests.
2. Table (10) below shows the credited and study hours for these courses:

Course title	Credited hours	Contact hours*
Basic Mathematics	Zero	4
IT for Foundation	Zero	4
Applied / Pure Math	Zero	4

*In HCT summer semester it can reach 5 hours for Math courses only.

3. The students score in the English Placement test will decide the level of the student in the foundation programme. Table (11) shows the suggested plan to study these courses:

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English for level 1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English for level 2 • Basic Mathematics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English for level 3 • Basic Mathematics • Applied / Pure Math (*) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English for level 4 • Basic Mathematics • Applied / Pure Math (*) • IT for Foundation

*The student studies this course in case he/she passed the pre-requisite course.

Students have 4 chances only:

First chance: If the student fails in Math & IT for the first time, he/she is allowed to re-take the course again.

Second chance: If the student fails the course again, he/she is only allowed to take the re-sit exam.

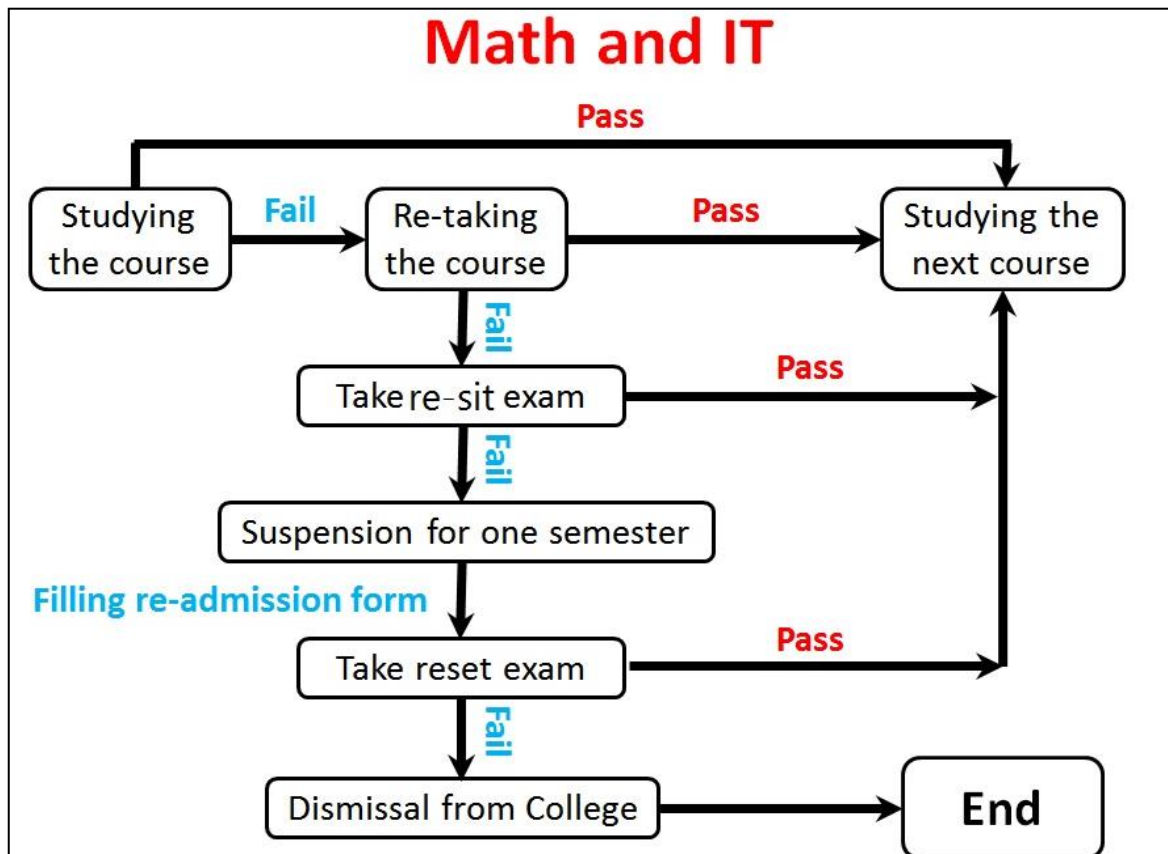
Third chance: If the student fails in the re-sit exam, he/she will be suspended for one semester. Students will not be allowed to study any courses of Math, IT or even English. No allowance will be paid for the student as well.

Last Chance: After suspension, the student has the last chance to take Math & IT exit exam. This exam is for 100 marks. Passing mark is 50%; none of the old assessment marks are considered. If he/she fails, he/she will be dismissed from the college.

*A student must pass all three courses of Basic Mathematics, Applied / Pure Math and IT before moving to study his first year of Diploma.

4. Diagram (2) below shows how these courses can be successfully accomplished:

Diagram (2)



5. High flyers have to pass the exit exams for all of these courses. In case they fail in any of them, they will not be allowed to start their first year of diploma. They must study and pass these courses as shown above.
6. The top score of the re-sit exam is the passing grade, and the top score for the Exit exam is 100 marks.
7. The following certificates (See Table 11 below) can be presented as equivalent to the IT course. Original certificate with successful completion should be submitted.

Covered Content	Certificate
1) Security for IT Users 2) IT User Fundamentals 3) Word Processing 4) Spreadsheets 5) Databases 6) Presentations 7) Using Email and the Internet	International Computer Driving License (ICDL)
1) Computing Fundamentals 2) Key Applications 3) Living Online	Internet and Computing Core Certification (IC3)

1) Introduction to Information Technology 2) Using the computers in managing files 3) Word Processing 4) Spreadsheets 5) Electronic Communication 6) Databases 7) Presentations	Cambridge International Diploma in IT Skills
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8) CIMS

CIMS, College Information Management System, is an on-line system that can be accessed by both lecturers and students. It can be found on the college website (<https://cims.manpower.gov.om/tcms/faces/login.jsf>). Through CIMS Students can register their courses, add & drop and they can submit appeals and transferring requests. In addition it will help the students to keep track of their attendance, as well as, to check their marks. The user-name of the students is their national ID number and the password is their College ID number. In case the students face any problems to log-in, they can ask for assistance from the ETC department.

9) Attendance Policy

The English Language Centre applies the following attendance system:

9.1. Attendance:

- Attendance is taken on a regular basis at the beginning of each lecture and absence is recorded for all the courses.
- A student is dismissed from the English Language Centre if s/he does not show up for two consecutive weeks (ten working days) without a valid reason.

9.2. Late Procedure:

Students are expected to attend all classes on time.

9.3 Warning Notices

Warning notices are issued according to the following criteria:

Absent for more than 5% = 1st warning

Absent for more than 10% = 2nd warning

Absent for more than 15% = Debarred from the Level Exit Exam

Note: Each warning notice is issued after excluding the hours of absence with valid excuses. Valid excuses are not to delete the absence record of a student.

9.4 Valid Excuses

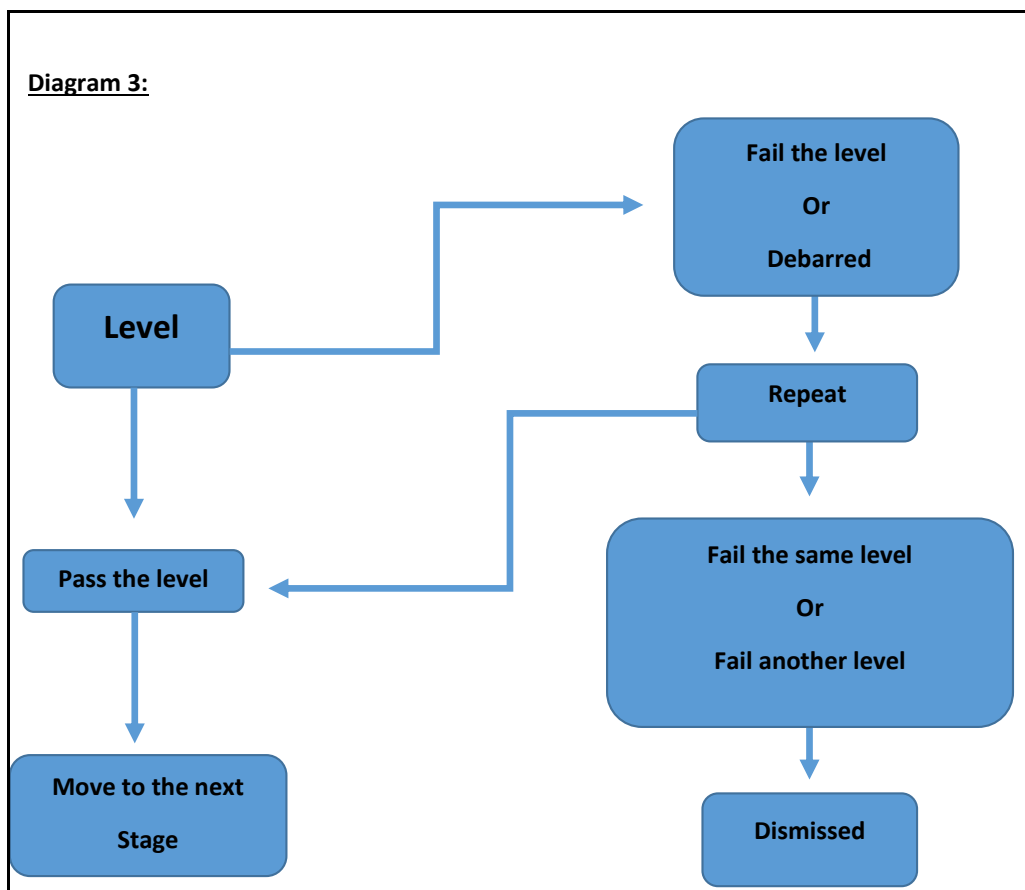
The following are accepted as valid excuses:

- Official sick leave issued and stamped by government hospitals and clinics. (Sick leaves from private clinics will not be accepted unless they are authorised by the government Health Centres.)
- An official letter from the Wali, after it is authorised by the Head of Section (English Language Programmes), regarding death of first degree relatives only.

Note: Other types of excuses will not be accepted. Excuses should be submitted to the Student Affairs during the week when absence occurred, or on the first two days of the following week at the latest. If submitted later, valid excuses will be accepted by Student Affairs and the students will be referred to Head of Section (English Language Programmes) in case of long absence.

10) GFP Policies and procedures

10.1 Level Repeat and Dismissal Policy: See Diagram 3:



10.2 Readmission

Dismissed students because of failing twice in the English Foundation Programme could appeal for readmission during the semester following their dismissal provided the appeal is submitted two weeks before the end of the semester. Appeals should be submitted to the Student Affairs office in the English Language Center. The maximum period to appeal for readmission is one year as from date of dismissal.

Note: To be readmitted, the student should bring Academic IELTS band 4.5 at least or sit for and pass the exit test of level 4 in the first attempt. Otherwise, s/he loses the chance for being readmitted.

10.3 Debarment

Students who are absent for 15% or more of classes will be debarred from writing the Level Exit Exam. A student who is debarred is considered failed, and therefore should repeat the level he/she is in, if the student who is debarred has already failed again, he/she will be dismissed

10.4 Postponement

Students can apply for postponement of their studies provided they have a valid reason accepted by the Centre and the Student Affairs Department. Relevant forms can be collected from Student Affairs or online from the college website.

Note: A student has the right to postpone his studies only twice during his study in the college.

10.5 Appeal Policy (Exams & General)

10.5.1 **Exams Appeals:** If a student fails a level, he/she has the right to appeal but this should be done within 3 working days from the date of publishing the results or the following semester.

10.5.2 If a student has complaints or any academic problems related to his studies at the Foundation period, he can report them to the GFP Director or the Head of ELP.

Relevant forms can be collected from GFP Administration Office or GFP Student Affairs services.

10.6 General Appeals: Missed Exams and Quizzes

Students who come late for the listening exam will NOT be admitted to the test. They can be admitted to the next section of the exam (reading). The listening exam can be administered to the late students immediately after the writing exam is completed. Any late students for either the reading or writing sections should not be admitted to the test at all. Students with valid excuses will be given a Make-Up Exam (refer to College Bylaw Article 71 and CoTs' Common Examination Procedures for GFPs).

10.7 Academic Integrity Violation Policy:

Plagiarism is an act of fraud. It involves both stealing someone else's work and lying about it afterward (<http://www.dictionary.com/browse/plagiarism>). Plagiarism includes, but not limited to, the following:

- Copying full or part (paragraphs, sentences or significant part of a sentence) of other's work or ideas directly from any sources of information such as internet, books, articles, films, television shows, videos, pictures, letters, emails, etc.
- Copying ideas or information from other's work with an end reference to the original source but without putting the copied text between quotation marks. (For Post Foundation – Degree Level students)
- Paraphrasing, summarising or rearranging words, phrases or ideas of other's work without acknowledging the author and source.
- Copy-Paste of statements from multiple sources (electronic or print material), and presenting it as one's own work.
- Presenting a work, done in collaboration with others, as independent work
- Using one's own work presented previously
- Using other students' work and presenting it as one's own work.

10.7.1 Disciplinary Action for Student Plagiarism

- **First offense:** Written warning and repeat the section of the work that is plagiarised.
- **Second offense:** Zero mark to be awarded to the sections of the work that is plagiarised.
- **Third offence:** Third offense Dismissal from the college.

10.8 Cheating

Cheating denotes the attempt by a student to copy from unauthorized sources. Such sources may be the examination paper of another student, a dictionary of any variety or a note or paper concealed on the student's person or item of stationery. Students caught cheating will receive a zero in the skill they cheated in. The cheating student's final marks will be withheld (left as blank on the CIMS), pending action from the Disciplinary Committee. It should be noted that the report of the invigilator in such instances will be taken as final.

10.9 Procedures for Withdrawing from the College

Fill in the application form for withdrawal from the College in the Student Affairs Department. Return your books to the GFP and get the clearance signatures of the SAC coordinator and the Director of the English Language Centre. Then get clearance of the main Library Coordinator. Finally, go to Student Affairs Department.

11. GFP Activities

11.1 Student Counselling and student grievances (Academic and Social)

The GFP provides two types of counselling:

Academic Counselling is a shared responsibility of both the GFP administration and the lecturers. Following your enrolment in the English Language Centre, and the initial assessment, you will be assigned a Course Tutor. You should consult him/her throughout your course of study when you have any queries or problems. You will be required to record your own progress throughout the Programme. Do not wait until a minor problem develops into a major one. You are encouraged to regard your Course Tutor as a resource to whom you can refer throughout the Programme.

Social Counselling: For social and personal problems that you may face during your course of study, you are advised to consult the Social Advisor at the GFP.

11.2 Co-Curricular Activities

The English Language Centre offers students plenty of opportunities to practice the English language skills. The Core Course Tutors will advise you to practice your English skills in a social setting by joining and participating in one of the available clubs organized each semester, such as Public Speaking, Media, Charity & Community, Cooking, Health & Safety and Advertising...etc.

12. GFP Resources

12.1 Educational

12.1.1 Self-Access Centre (SAC)

The Self-Access Centre, or the SAC, as the name suggests, is a place where students are free to access, i.e., to choose and use, the resources according to their individual needs and interests. In other words, it is a place where students work independently in order to improve their English language proficiency.

12.2 Other Facilities

12.2.1 Canteen

Open during working hours. (refer to **16.2.1**)

12.2.2 Clinic

A nurse will be available for initial consultation, first aid and minor health problems. He/she will direct the student to the appropriate clinic for conditions which require special attention. The college treatment room is open from 8.00 a.m. to 3.00 p.m. during normal working days.

13. Code of Conduct

Learning Commitment

The students will undertake to follow a code of study and behavioural practice which, when coupled with the college bylaw and directions from GFP staff, will enable them to achieve their maximum potential. The Codes of conduct, which the student will be expected to observe, are as follows:

- To treat all members of the college staff and students with respect, consideration and politeness
- To avoid damage to or misuse of all buildings, equipment and fittings
- To always bring the college ID.
- To attend classes according to the timetable
- To make every effort to meet the deadlines set for submitted work
- To read and follow all safety instructions provided in all premises of the college
- To wear decent dress according to Islamic requirements
- To maintain a suitable appearance (i.e. not to grow long hair (for boys))
- To keep mobile phones switched off in the classrooms and SAC.
- Not to smoke within the college
- Not to play cards or UNO.
- Not to have food or drinks in classrooms and SAC.
- Not to give information or interviews to any media organization without the express permission of the College Dean
- Not to engage in any activity or performance during time-tabled periods or in free time, which would adversely affect the reputation and good name of the college
- Not to disrupt the smooth administration of any examination, either individually or in association with others.
- Not to knock and disturb another class when it is in session.

Note:

- Check Articles 73 – 77 of the College Bylaws for more details.
- Check Article 78 regarding penalty for violating the Code of Behaviour.

14. Health & Safety

The responsibility for your safety and that of others in the college will lie with you. Therefore, you have to consider the following:

- You should read and follow all safety instructions in the college premises.
- Your conduct must not endanger any other person.
- If you suffer from any disability or long term health problem (e.g. asthma, diabetes ...etc), you should inform your Tutor.
- Stairways and fire exits must be kept clear at all times.
- Do not use any equipment without getting permission.
- You must drive carefully within the college campus, use students' parking areas and observe all relevant signs.
- You should keep your college, classrooms and labs clean.

15 Frequently Asked Questions:

- a. Where do I go if I need help when studying at the English language Centre?**
 - i. First, see your lecturers to help you solve your problems. If it doesn't help, contact the administration staff (the Director or the Heads of Section). For non-academic help refer to the social counselor or the Student Affairs in the GFP.
- b. What do I do in my free time in the English Language Centre?**
 - i. Speak, read, and write in English. Visit the library, or the Free Access Lab. Join the English Clubs. Do your homework. Meet your tutor during the Academic Advising hours.
- c. Can I get extra help outside class time?**
 - i. Yes, you can. Make an appointment with your course tutor to see him/her during Academic Advising hours.
- d. What do I do if I lose my books?**
 - i. Be careful with your books. If you lose a book, you have to buy the same book from any bookshop outside the college.
- e. Does it matter if I don't bring my ID card everyday?**
 - i. Yes, it does. Any staff member or lecturer could ask for it any time for any reason. So, keep it available.
- f. Where do I submit my excuses?**
 - i. Give them to your course lecturer/ Student Affairs. Sick leaves and official letters from the Wali (e.g. re: death of first degree relatives) are accepted. In case you miss a quiz/exam, you must submit your excuse so that you could sit for a make-up test/exam.
- g. Can I sit for the exam without a student card?**
 - i. You can't. The lecturers invigilating the tests may not be your lecturer, so you must bring your ID card.
- h. Can I ask to re-check my exam paper?**
 - i. Yes, you can but it is only for the final exam. You need to fill in an appeal form in the ELC's secretary office.
- i. Can I appeal for readmission if I'm dismissed?**
 - i. Yes, you can. Go to the Student Affairs office in the Centre to fill in an appeal form.
- j. Can I attend the lesson if I am late?**
 - i. Yes, you can. If you are late, you can attend the lesson, but you will be marked as late. For every 3 late lessons, you will be considered as one hour absent.
- k. What happens if I don't show up for classes?**
 - ✓ If you don't show up for classes for 10 days (i.e. 2 consecutive weeks) without a valid excuse, you will be dismissed. Group no-show is absolutely banned. If a whole group doesn't show up for a class, all students will be penalized.
- l. What does it mean to be "debarred"?**
 - ✓ It means you are not allowed to write the Level Exit Exam. However, you must continue to attend classes till the end. As a result, for not writing the exit exam, you should repeat the same level you are in.
- m. What does "academic advising" mean?**
 - ✓ Three hours are scheduled for academic advising during which you could consult your course tutor if you have any queries or problems.

16. ELC Students' Activities and Facilities

16.1.1. Writing Centre

Writing Centre is another platform for students' support system at ELC. The centre provides an opportunity for students to participate in writing workshops, one-on-one consultations, and group discussions. This will enable students to develop confidence in writing and achieve learner autonomy. In addition, the centre also will publish students' best write-ups in ELC Newsletter to encourage them to continue the process of writing. Writing Centre Service is available to all Foundation and Post Foundation level students who need assistance in writing. Students have to sign up for an appointment with the Writing Centre online to avail its service.

16.1.2. English society

English society has been set up at ELC to provide the interested candidates with a platform to participate and get training in various activities using English as the language of communication. English society at present caters to the students through:

Vocabulary Builder's Club – Vocabulary Builder's Club offers sessions in vocabulary building strategies for interested students.

Speaking Course- students of all four levels of General Foundation Program and students in Post-Foundation Program are the stake-holders of Speaking Course wherein training sessions are held in English conversational skills twice a week and competitions are held at the end of the training period.

Public Speaking Skills- English society also arranges events and competitions in recitation, narration, extempore and prepared elocution, general knowledge quiz, poster making, poem writing and story writing. Besides, English Society screens English movies with English subtitles, screens students' productions of short films and holds sessions in dramatics wherein students act out self-scripted skits and monologues as part of training in public speaking skills.

Master of Ceremony – this segment provides training to students to anchor programs in English. Participants get real time training in anchoring programs.

16.1.3. Talk Time

Talk Time is another club activity which trains students in Communicative English. Students who participate in Talk Time will have opportunities to develop and utilize their conversational skills in a non-academic setting. Talk Time will meet twice a week for sessions of 50 minutes each. Students will develop leadership and interaction skills and get to hone their critical thinking skills. Participants shall receive Certificates of Participation at the end of the semester.

16.2. Other Facilities

16.2.1 Canteen

ELC has a canteen which serves a variety of snacks and Arabic cuisine. It is on the ground floor of ELC building. Apart from this, there is another canteen to cater to students' needs. It is adjacent to the building which houses offices of the college administration. Both these canteens are open on all working days.

16.2.2. Recreational and Fitness Facilities

There are ample recreational facilities for students at ICT. Students have facilities for various sports and games within the college campus. The college has a good football field, a basketball court and a badminton court too. There are also facilities for table tennis in the college.

17 References

- Ministry Web site for Bylaws:
<http://www.manpower.gov.om>
- College Web site for facilities available in the college:
<http://www.hct.edu.om/>
- GFP link in the college web site for more details about the English Language Programmes:
<http://www.hct.edu.om/centers/english-language-center>
- Instagram account of the college:
https://www.instagram.com/hct_official
- Twitter account of the college:
https://twitter.com/HCT_OMAN