



STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

SOP CODE	SOP TITLE
ZQA-001-02	PROCEDURE GOVERNING THE QUALITY MAILSHOT INITIATIVE

PART 1

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Date of issue:

Date of next revision:

PART 4 (To be filled in by OOTS, QSU or RSSD)

<input type="checkbox"/> This procedure has been revised and is no longer valid as from: (Write date)	<input type="checkbox"/> Date of NEXT REVISION is extended until: (Max. 4 years)	<input type="checkbox"/> SOP rendered obsolete on: (Write date)
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1. Reason for revision

- 1.1. Added new sections (4.1.4. and 6.1.5.) to introduce the requirement of obtaining the relevant Head of Department's approval prior to disseminating information related to that Department, to ensure correctness of information.

2. Purpose and scope

- 2.1. The purpose of this SOP is to document the procedure governing the 'Quality Mailshot Initiative', which was launched by the Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) in 2019 to highlight good quality practices by means of occasional mailshots.
- 2.2. The procedure outlined in this SOP involves four main stages, namely the development, dissemination, follow-up and subsequent archiving of such mailshots.

3. Definitions

- 3.1. AIMS: Administrative Information Management Systems. This system was established in order to have an integrated management information system which adequately serves the University of Malta's dynamic business and operational demands.
- 3.2. CMS: Content Management System
- 3.3. F/I/C/S/D: Faculty / Institute / Centre / School / Department
- 3.4. Mailshot: An e-mail disseminated to a large number of people.
- 3.5. Pro-Rector: The Pro-Rector responsible for quality assurance.
- 3.6. QAC: Quality Assurance Committee
- 3.7. QSU: Quality Support Unit
- 3.8. Reminder email: An e-mail sent by QSU to the Marketing, Communications & Alumni Office one day prior to the scheduled release of a mailshot.
- 3.9. UM: University of Malta

4. Responsibilities

4.1. Roles and Responsibilities of the QSU

- 4.1.1. Devise a schedule for dissemination, to be vetted and approved by the Pro-Rector.
- 4.1.2. Liaise with the relevant F/I/C/S/D to determine what the content of the mailshot should be, and request an accompanying image if necessary.
- 4.1.3. Prepare a draft of the mailshot to present to the respective entity and Pro-Rector for vetting and approval.
- 4.1.4. Seek the approval of the relevant Head of Department to ensure that the information to be disseminated is correct (unless such information was provided by a Head of Department in the first place).
- 4.1.5. Send a reminder email to the Marketing, Communications & Alumni Office one day prior to the dissemination of mailshots.
- 4.1.6. Oversee any feedback received in reply to the mailshots, and take relevant action as necessary.
- 4.1.7. Retain a record of all feedback received in reply to released mailshots.
- 4.1.8. Archive disseminated mailshots on the QAC website.

4.2. Roles and Responsibilities of the F/I/C/S/D

- 4.2.1. Liaise with QSU regarding the subject and content of the mailshot.
- 4.2.2. Provide a suitable accompanying image if necessary.
- 4.2.3. Vet and approve the mailshot draft once finalized.

4.3. Roles and Responsibilities of the Pro-Rector

- 4.3.1. Vet and approve the mailshot dissemination schedule.
- 4.3.2. Approve or reject suggestions for new mailshots received from F/I/C/S/D.
- 4.3.3. Vet and approve mailshot drafts once finalized.

4.4. Roles and Responsibilities of the Marketing, Communications & Alumni Office

- 4.4.1. Oversee the dissemination of mailshots once a reminder email is received from QSU.

5. Health and Safety requirements

- 5.1. N/A

6. Procedure

6.1. Mailshot Development

6.1.1. QSU are to propose a schedule for the dissemination of mailshots throughout the academic year, keeping in mind the following ideal parameters:

- A minimum of 14 days is to be kept between mailshots.
- No mailshots are to be sent during examination sessions and recesses.

6.1.2. Notwithstanding the above, it is at the discretion of the Pro-Rector to decide on alternative scheduling arrangements and to direct QSU accordingly.

6.1.3. The initial idea as to the development of a new mailshot comes from a direct suggestion by the Pro-Rector, or from a suggestion received by a F/I/C/S/D. In the latter case, QSU are to seek the Pro-Rector's approval as to whether the suggestion received should be considered for dissemination as a mailshot.

6.1.4. Once the subject for a new mailshot is approved, QSU are to liaise with the relevant F/I/C/S/D to prepare a draft text. As a general rule, the text should be limited to around 50-60 words, but exceptions are possible depending on the mailshot's subject. The text's formatting must follow [UM's branding guidelines](#). Bold words may be used for emphasis.

6.1.5. Unless the content of a mailshot is suggested by a Head of Department, QSU shall seek the approval of the relevant Head of Department prior to disseminating information related to that Department, to ensure that the information is correct.

6.1.6. At the end of each mailshot, the following text is to be included: *Do you have an example of good quality practice at your unit which you would like us to share? Get in touch with us on gac@um.edu.mt.*

6.1.7. Each mailshot is to be accompanied by a suitable image, to be included horizontally above the main text. The dimensions of the image must be 580 pixels in length and 209 pixels in width. Ideally, the respective entity is to provide such suitable image, but QSU may also put forth suggestions. Whatever the source, the final image is to be approved by the F/I/C/S/D in question as well as by the Pro-Rector.

6.1.8. Once the text and image are finalized, the mailshot is to be uploaded on CMS following the below procedure (basic understanding and training in CMS is presumed):

6.1.8..1. The image is to be uploaded in the **Banners** folder to be found following this path: **Quality Assurance Committee** (id #420006) > **Mailshots** (id #416703) > **Banners (580 x 209px)** (id #416704).

6.1.8..2. The text is to be uploaded in a new News Item following this path: **Quality Assurance Committee** (id #420006) > **Mailshots** (id #416703) > **Quality Assurance Committee** (id #415728).

6.1.8..3. To create a new News Item, right-click on the folder **Quality Assurance Committee** (id #415728) to bring up a pop-up menu. Select **New Child > News > News Item**.

6.1.8..4. On the new News Item page, the **News headline** field should be filled with the mailshot's subject title. This title is generally suggested by QSU and approved by the Pro-Rector. The mailshot text should be inputted in the **Body (WYSIWYG Content Container)**. Default formatting options are to be used (Font: Arial, Font Size: 2 (13px), Left Alignment).

6.1.8..5. All other fields are to remain blank. Once the green **Commit** button is clicked, the page will refresh to display the inputted details. The image must now be attached to the News Item by clicking **Acquire Lock**, and choosing the **Change** option under the **Thumbnail** section. The user can then select the previously uploaded image from the **Banners (580 x 209px)** folder (id #416704) by right-clicking on the relevant image and selecting **Use me**.

6.1.8..6. Once ready, the status of the News Item needs to be changed from **Under Construction** to **Live**. This can be changed from the **Status** section at the top. A drop-down menu is available next to the **Change?** option, where the user can select **Approve and Make Live**.

6.1.8..7. To finish the process, the user must again click on the green **Commit** button, and can then click on **Release Lock**.

6.1.9. Once the above process is finished, the new mailshot (as a News Item) will appear at the bottom of the list of mailshots (News Items) under the **Quality Assurance Committee** (id #415728) folder.

6.1.10. The next mailshot to be sent is always the **first News Item in this list which is marked as Live**. Therefore, the next mailshot scheduled for release is to be manually dragged to the top of this list, and all other mailshots (News Items) beneath it are ideally marked as **Under Construction**.

6.1.11. The URL for the next scheduled mailshot is always: https://www.um.edu.mt/newspointemail/general/_nocache?dept=415728. The content will change according to the first mailshot (News Item) to be listed as **Live** in the list.

6.2. Mailshot Dissemination

6.2.1. One week prior to the scheduled release of a mailshot, QSU is to check that the mailshot's content is still up-to-date and relevant, by liaising with the entity in question if necessary.

6.2.2. One day prior to the scheduled release of a mailshot, QSU is to send a reminder email to announce@um.edu.mt. The Senior Executive of the Marketing, Communications & Alumni Office and a Senior IT Specialist II are to be kept in copy.

6.2.3. The reminder email should contain the four main details listed below. Apart from the **Subject**, all other details should remain the same for each mailshot:

- **URL:** This will always be the same URL, i.e. <https://www.um.edu.mt/newspointemail/general/nocache?dept=415728>
- **Subject:** The mailshot's subject title, which will feature as the subject of the actual e-mail.
- **From:** The sender of the mailshot, which is nominally the Quality Assurance Committee, so the official e-mail address is used: gac@um.edu.mt
- **Recipients:** The people who should receive the mailshot, i.e. all UM and Junior College Staff, and all UM Students.

6.2.4. The Marketing, Communications & Alumni Office are to acknowledge receipt of the reminder e-mail, and subsequently disseminate the mailshot the following day.

6.3. Mailshot Follow-Up

6.3.1. Following the release of a mailshot, a number of recipients may e-mail a reply. QSU are to monitor any such replies and take action as necessary.

6.3.2. QSU are to retain a record of all the responses received in reply to released mailshots, detailing any action taken where relevant.

6.4. Mailshots Archiving

6.4.1. Once a mailshot is released, QSU is to archive it on the [Quality Mailshots](#) section of the QAC website within reasonable time.

6.4.2. Each mailshot is to be featured as an 'accordion', showing the mailshot's text once opened. At the end of the text, a link should be added to **View full mailshot** as a PDF.

6.4.3. To create a PDF record of a mailshot, the following procedure is to be followed:

6.4.3..1. Access this [link](#), which should feature the latest mailshot released, right-click anywhere and select **Print...** from the drop-down menu.

6.4.3..2. In the *Destination* field, select **Save as PDF**. The other options should be: *Pages: All, Layout: Portrait, Paper Size: A4, Pages per sheet: 1, Margins: Default, Scale: Default, Headers and footers: Unticked, Background graphics: Unticked*. When ready, click **Save**.

6.4.3..3. The PDF should then be uploaded on CMS in the folder **Mailshot PDFs** (id #420651), found under **Quality Assurance Committee** (id #420006) > **Mailshots** (id #416703)

6.4.3..4. The PDF is then to be linked to the words '**View full mailshot**' under the relevant mailshot's accordion.

7. References

7.1. **University Brand Manual** [Online], available at:

https://www.um.edu.mt/_data/assets/pdf_file/0004/384403/brandmanual.pdf

[Accessed 20th May 2020]

7.2. **Current mailshot URL** [Online], available at:

https://www.um.edu.mt/newspointemail/general/_nocache?dept=415728

[Accessed 20th May 2020]

7.3. **Quality Mailshots Section on the QAC Website** [Online], available at:

<https://www.um.edu.mt/about/qualityassurance/qualitymailshots>

[Accessed 20th May 2020]

8. List of appendices/worksheets

8.1. N/A