

Policy and Procedure

European College of Polytechnics

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European College of Polytechnics

1. About the European College of Polytechnics

Inaugurated on August 13, 2021, the European College of Polytechnics ('ECP') operates as a private limited liability company with formal registration in Estonia under the registration code 16291442 and an activity licence notification numbered 225325. The registered premises of ECP are located at Ranna 31, 40231, Sillamäe, Estonia. According to the Estonian Classification of Economic Activities (EMTAK), ECP's main operational focus, coded 85599, pertains specifically to the provision of education.

1.1. Mission

By providing comprehensive, practice-oriented education that bridges the gap between traditional academic boundaries and the dynamic needs of the global market, the European College of Polytechnics is committed to empowering the next generation of professionals. Its mission is to foster an environment of innovation, critical thinking, and technical excellence, enabling students to achieve their full potential and contribute effectively to society and the economy. It tailors education to each student's unique abilities and aspirations, equipping graduates for prosperous careers in a world undergoing rapid change.

1.2. Vision

The European College of Polytechnics aspires to be recognised globally as a pioneering institution in polytechnic education, setting benchmarks for innovation, sustainability, and international collaboration. The vision encompasses a future where its graduates are at the forefront of technological breakthroughs, sustainable practices, and cross-cultural initiatives, significantly contributing to the prosperity of communities around the world.

1.3. Core Values

The European College of Polytechnics encapsulates its core value using the word polytechnics itself, an acronym that reflects the institution's foundational principles and aspirations.

- (1) Practicality: emphasising practical skills and hands-on learning to ensure students are ready for the workforce upon graduation.
- (2) Openness: promoting an open-minded approach to education and encouraging students and faculty to explore, innovate, and collaborate without boundaries.
- (3) Leadership: cultivating leadership qualities in students, preparing them to lead in their fields with integrity, innovation, and a global perspective.

- (4) Youthfulness: embracing the energy, innovation, and forward-thinking mind-set of youth, the college fosters an environment that encourages students to challenge the status quo, innovate, and pursue ambitious goals.
- (5) Technology-driven: ensuring that curriculum, research, and collaboration are infused with the latest technology trends and digital advancements.
- (6) Excellence: striving for excellence in all endeavours, from academic achievements to ethical conduct and professional contributions.
- (7) Collaboration: encouraging teamwork and partnerships across disciplines, industries, and borders to enhance the educational experience and address global challenges.
- (8) Holistic development: Focusing on the holistic development of students, encompassing intellectual, professional, and personal growth.
- (9) Networking: building a robust network of alumni, professionals, and academic institutions to support students' career development and lifelong learning.
- (10) Innovation: fostering a culture of innovation where creativity and problem-solving are encouraged, leading to new ideas and advancements.
- (11) Creativity: valuing creativity in solving complex problems, designing new products, and improving processes within technical and vocational disciplines.
- (12) Sustainability: Integrating sustainable practices into all aspects of the curriculum and campus operations, preparing students to contribute to a sustainable future.

The acronym Polytechnics encapsulates the core values and aspirations of the European College of Polytechnics, reflecting its commitment to a comprehensive, forward-thinking approach to polytechnic education. Through these principles, the college aims to prepare its students for successful careers and meaningful contributions to society, grounded in the practical application of knowledge, innovation, and global collaboration.

1.4. Organisational Structure

The European College of Polytechnics introduces a dedicated team, committed to excellence in education, research, and administration. The organisational structure is designed to ensure the fulfilment of goals related to providing quality education and contributing to the advancement of knowledge in various fields.

1.4.1. Leadership

At the helm of the European College of Polytechnics, the leadership team steers the organisation towards its mission of academic excellence and innovation. The team is led by the

Director, tasked with setting the strategic direction of the college and ensuring its successful execution. The Deputy Director supports the Director, playing a pivotal role in overseeing day-to-day operations and assisting in the administration of college policies and procedures.

Table 1. Governance and Functions

Governance Structure	Functions
Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establishes strategic objectives and oversees their implementation. - Manages day-to-day operations and assists in policy administration.
Academic Division	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Directs the development and delivery of academic programmes. - Engages in teaching, fostering an environment of learning and innovation. - Manages assessments, progression, and the conferment of awards. - Enhances global engagement and partnership development. - Includes and manages various committees such as the academic misconduct panel, admissions committee, learning, teaching and assessment committee, and quality and standards committee.
Research Division	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Coordinates research activities, funding, and collaborations. - Oversees the operational management of research projects. - Includes and manages the research and ethics committee to ensure ethical conduct and enterprise collaboration in research. - Manages and executes the research strategies and initiatives.
Administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Manages administrative functions, including facilities and student services. - Handles budgeting, financial reporting, and fiscal management. - Supports a range of administrative activities. - Includes and manages the core IT systems, data governance, fees, and pricing committee, and coordinates with academic and leadership divisions. - Includes and coordinates the activities focused on academic standards, audits and risks, finance and human resources, and remuneration.

Note. Table 1 delineates the organisational framework and respective responsibilities within the European College of Polytechnics. This structured overview segments the organisation into four primary governance divisions, each with specific functions that collectively ensure the college's operational, academic, research, and administrative excellence. It is important to note that the functions listed within each division are critical to the organisation's success but are not exhaustive, indicating the possibility of additional duties and responsibilities that contribute to the overarching mission and vision of the college.

1.4.2. Academic Division

The Academic Division serves as the foundation of the educational mission, committed to offering a comprehensive and inspiring curriculum across various disciplines. This division is under the guidance of the Programme Head, who is responsible for the oversight of academic programme development and delivery, ensuring they adhere to the highest standards of quality and relevance. Lecturers, experts in their respective fields, contribute a rich repository of knowledge and experience to the educational environment, promoting an atmosphere of learning, discovery, and engagement for students.

1.4.3. Research Division

The Research Division of the European College of Polytechnics leads innovation, conducting pioneering research that furthers the fields of science and technology. The division operates under the leadership of the Project Head, who organises research activities and

projects, secures funding, and encourages collaboration with both industry and academic partners. A Project Manager assists the Project Head by overseeing the day-to-day management of research projects to ensure timely completion and adherence to budget constraints.

1.4.4. Administration

The efficient operation of the European College of Polytechnics is upheld by the administration team, which ensures the organisation functions smoothly and effectively. The Operations Manager supervises the administrative aspects of the college, ranging from facility management to student services. The Accountant manages the college's finances, encompassing budgeting, financial reporting, and fiscal responsibility. An Assistant supports a wide range of administrative duties, crucial for upholding the organisation's standards of operational excellence.

2. Admission Policy

2.1 Admission of the Student

The European College of Polytechnics upholds an admissions policy that mirrors its dedication to offering comprehensive, practice-oriented education. Central to ECP's mission is the empowerment of future professionals through an educational environment enriched with innovation, critical thinking, and technical prowess. The ECP endeavours to unlock each student's potential, fostering their ability to make meaningful contributions to society and the economy. In line with its mission, ECP's admissions framework seeks candidates who:

- (1) Exhibit the potential to thrive in their chosen field of study, demonstrating capabilities that align with the college's innovative and rigorous academic standards.
- (2) Are likely to benefit from ECP's unique educational approach, thereby advancing personal growth and career readiness.
- (3) Show commitment and enthusiasm for embracing the learning opportunities provided by ECP, ready to engage in an environment that champions innovation and adaptability.
- (4) The European College of Polytechnics evaluates every application on its individual merits, assessing the alignment between the applicant's qualifications and the objectives of the selected programme. This holistic review process ensures that admissions decisions support the college's mission of preparing graduates for successful careers in an ever-changing global landscape. Applicants are also required to confirm their eligibility to undertake their studies, which may include verifying their previous qualifications and exercising their legal right to study in their chosen location.

2.2 Equality of Opportunity

- (5) The European College of Polytechnics is committed to ensuring equality of opportunity for all applicants, irrespective of their nationality, age, gender, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, marital status, political or religious beliefs, or any other grounds that cannot be justified.
- (6) The ECP is dedicated to promoting broader participation and fostering access for all individuals, aligning with their aspirations and their capacity to fulfil the academic and professional standards required by their chosen course of study.
- (7) Applicants who have a disability or specific educational need are evaluated based on the same entry criteria applied to all other candidates.
- (8) Individuals with a disability or special educational needs are strongly encouraged to specify the nature of their condition on their application form or to reach out to the European College of Polytechnics' academic division to discuss any concerns or specific requirements related to their disability.
- (9) The particular needs of students who disclose a disability or specific educational requirements on their application form or to the admissions team are forwarded to the leadership division. This referral is conducted for a thorough assessment of their needs and to enable the European College of Polytechnics to provide any reasonable adjustments necessary to facilitate the applicant's education at the institution.

2.3. Entry Requirement

- (10) The European College of Polytechnics reserves the exclusive right to determine:
 - a. The entry criteria for each course of study leading to a certificate or award from the European College of Polytechnics.
 - b. The admission of any individual applicant to a specific course based on the entry criteria for that course of study.
- (11) Each application is evaluated on its own merits, with admission to a course of study at the institution being contingent upon an assessment of the applicant's relative merits and abilities. The admissions process may also include an interview to evaluate motivations, prior experience, suitability for a student visa, and to verify the information provided in the application.
- (12) The primary academic criterion for assessing an applicant's suitability for admission is the reasonable expectation that the candidate will be able to fulfil the learning outcomes of the course and attain the standard required for the award. The institution seeks evidence of academic achievement as well as personal and professional

experience indicative of the applicant's ability to meet the academic and any professional requirements of the course.

- (13) Applicants must be aged 18 or older by the start date of their chosen course.
- (14) The European College of Polytechnics publishes the entry criteria for each course of study it offers, requiring applicants to demonstrate they have met these criteria.
- (15) International qualifications are typically evaluated in accordance with European Network of National Information Centres (ENIC) guidelines.
- (16) For courses validated by a partner organisation or other awarding body, admission is based on the requirements set forth by that entity.
- (17) Information provided on application forms is generally treated as confidential within the institution and used solely for the purpose of making an admissions decision. However, the ECP reserves the right to inform other relevant parties for the purposes of preventing fraud and impropriety, such as awarding bodies and other relevant authorities.
- (18) The ECP may, at its discretion, adjust its standard offer based on the individual circumstances of applicants.
- (19) The ECP may withdraw any offer of study, even after enrolment, if it is discovered that a student has provided inaccurate or incomplete information to the institution or other relevant bodies.
- (20) An offer to study at the ECP remains valid from the date of enrolment up to the standard duration of the course, unless significant changes to entry requirements have been documented by the academic division. For instance, if the standard duration of a course is nine months, then an offer to study is only valid from the enrolment date up to nine months.
- (21) The ECP regularly audits and reviews the offers made to applicants. Should it be discovered that an offer was made in error and does not meet the ECP's entry requirements, the ECP reserves the right to take back or change the offer.

2.4. English Language Requirement

- (22) Applicants for whom English is not a primary language must provide proof of their English language proficiency through specific assessments. Each course has its own requirements, which the applicant has to fulfil.
- (23) There are circumstances under which the requirement for an English language test may be waived, particularly if the applicant has completed recent academic studies in English. At the discretion of the European College of Polytechnics, candidates might

be asked to participate in an English Proficiency Entrance Assessment interview conducted by the academic division during the admissions process.

- (24) If, at any point, it becomes apparent to the ECP that a student struggles to communicate effectively or engage with their studies due to insufficient English language skills, the European College of Polytechnics retains the authority to subject the student to a re-evaluation by any method deemed suitable. Should the student fail to meet the required English language standard upon re-testing, or if they do not comply with the re-test request, the ECP reserves the right to deny enrolment or to discontinue the student's participation in the programme.

2.5. Candidates with a Criminal Record

- (25) Generally, having a previous criminal conviction does not automatically disqualify a candidate from being accepted into the European College of Polytechnics. Nevertheless, applications from individuals with a criminal conviction are subject to thorough review under the Estonian law for admitting students with a criminal conviction. This is to ensure that the safety of students, staff, and the broader college community is not compromised, and that the integrity of the course, the college's processes, and its reputation remain intact.
- (26) The European College of Polytechnics retains the authority to withdraw an offer if, upon review of a disclosure, it is determined there is a potential risk, or if it appears the applicant may be unable to successfully complete the course due to their past conviction.

2.6. Readmission

- (27) Learners who have exited a programme at the European College of Polytechnics without full completion, or those removed for failing to meet academic standards, cannot seek readmission to the identical or a related programme, especially if it includes any core module previously failed, until the period equivalent to the standard duration of the course has passed. Students withdrawing mid-course are required to restart the programme from the beginning, adhering to the initial admission criteria specified by ECP.
- (28) Reapplication to a distinct programme may be possible under extraordinary circumstances, subject to individual evaluation. This process demands a detailed written rationale and involves a review interview conducted by the appropriate academic department, where the student's past academic records are considered.

(29) Requests for reenrolment that involve the recognition of prior learning may be considered according to the college's formal policies on the Recognition of Prior Learning as well as the partner organisations awarding the qualification.

(30) Students removed for breaches of academic integrity, misconduct, or other disciplinary actions are ineligible for readmission to any course offered by the European College of Polytechnics.

2.7. Review and Monitoring

(31) The academic division oversees the monitoring of the European College of Polytechnics' admissions policy, ensuring it undergoes an annual review. The leadership and academic division retains the authority to implement resolutions not explicitly stated within the admissions policy.

(32) Data pertaining to student admissions, progression, and retention are gathered on an annual basis for information that serves to enlighten relevant departments and the relevant divisions, contributing to the process of annual evaluation and monitoring.

3. Induction and Registration

3.1. Initial Orientation

The induction phase starts with comprehensive communication outlining the process, followed by a welcome session that introduces new students to the ECP's ethos, academic expectations, and essential facilities through campus tours and academic orientations. This stage culminates in the formal registration process, where students finalise their enrolment, course introduction, learning management system, study resources, and administrative formalities, ensuring they are fully integrated into the academic learning system..

3.2. Resource Introduction and Community Integration

Following registration, students are acquainted with vital student services, including academic support, counselling, and career guidance, through targeted or guided sessions. The induction period also includes social events and essential safety and conduct briefings, facilitating a smooth transition into the academic community and fostering a sense of belonging and preparedness for the academic challenges ahead.

4. Examination Policy

- (1) The ECP conducts examinations in two formats, adhering to this policy:
 - a. Traditional Exams - conducted in-person at designated examination centres.
 - b. Virtual Exams - overseen online with proctoring technology.

- (2) Students are obligated to follow this Examination Policy, in addition to adhering to the ECP's academic regulations.

4.1 Student Responsibilities

- (3) It is the student's duty to verify exam information, such as format (in-person or online), dates, times, and locations, through the ECP's learning platforms.
- (4) Entry to examinations requires a valid photo ID, like a passport or institution-issued student ID card.
- (5) Ensuring possession of the correct exam paper falls under student responsibility.
- (6) Students with disabilities or specific educational needs must inform the academic division to arrange necessary exam accommodations.

4.2. In-Person Exam Specifics

- (7) Prior to starting, students must read all necessary instructions.
- (8) Necessary exam equipment, except for provided materials, must be brought by students.
- (9) All written responses are to be completed in black ink.
- (10) Valuables should not be brought to the exam venue; the ECP or exam centre is not liable for personal item loss or damage.
- (11) Any required payments to the examination centre are the student's responsibility and must be settled before the exam date to avoid being barred from examination and receiving a non-submission score.
- (12) Completing the student registration report is mandatory before starting the exam.

4.3. Online Exam Specifics

- (13) Participation in online exams requires prior acknowledgment of specific instructions, including privacy notices, which are integral to the registration process.
- (14) Failure to accept the online exam guidelines results in non-registration and a non-submission score.
- (15) A compatible device with the specified operating system is necessary for online exams.
- (16) Prior to the exam, students are solely responsible for arranging a steady internet connection, as well as a functional webcam and microphone, which must have been tested beforehand.
- (17) The exam environment should be quiet, well-lit, and free from disruptions, with the student's work area organised following specific guidelines.

4.4. Lateness and Absence

- (18) Absences must be justified with extenuating circumstances submissions; otherwise, a non-submission score is recorded.
- (19) Late arrivals are admitted within the first 15 minutes of the exam; beyond this, the student is considered absent, resulting in a non-submission score.
- (20) Lateness is documented for both exam formats, affecting available exam time.

4.5. Exiting the Examination

- (21) Specific rules govern early or temporary departures from both in-person and online exams, focusing on maintaining exam integrity and accommodating necessary breaks while minimizing disruptions.

4.6. Exam Conduct

- (22) In-person exam conduct includes attracting invigilator attention, remaining silent during collection, and adhering to specific seating and electronic device guidelines.
- (23) Online exam conduct involves ensuring visibility, solitude, and adherence to specific room setup and identity verification procedures to uphold academic integrity.

4.7. Responsibilities of Exam Centres and Invigilators

- (24) Examination officers and invigilators at in-person centres are responsible for securing exams, overseeing the examination environment, and handling incidents.
- (25) Online exam invigilators manage preparatory communications, support students before and during exams, and ensure the integrity of the examination process.

4.8. Special Arrangements and Deviations

- (26) Students needing specific examination accommodations must inform the ECP's academic division and administration division in advance. Accommodations can include extra time, alternative formats, or assistive technology. Instances requiring temporary exam departure due to health reasons should be documented, and students must apply for justifying circumstances accordingly.
- (27) Invigilators document any breaches of examination rules. Disruptive behaviour may lead to removal from the exam, with incidents recorded for disciplinary action. For in-person exams, procedures are in place for handling Academic Integrity and Misconduct (AIM), including marking of the answer book and submission of a detailed report. Online exams monitor for deviations like security bypass attempts or unauthorised breaks, with potential AIM investigations following any rule violations.

5. Extension to Assessment Deadlines Policy

5.1. How to Apply for an Extension

- (1) Extensions to assessment deadlines at the European College of Polytechnics may be granted under exceptional circumstances, typically not exceeding seven days beyond the original submission date.
- (2) Extensions are granted only for unforeseen, short-term situations beyond a student's control that adversely affect their ability to prepare for or complete an assessment.
- (3) Normally, extensions are not applicable to exams, 24-hour assessments, or timed assessments.
- (4) Acceptable reasons for an extension include (but are not limited to): acute personal illness near the submission date, excluding chronic conditions; death or severe illness of a close relative, friend, or dependent; unexpected events beyond the student's reasonable control.
- (5) Unacceptable reasons for requesting an extension include (but are not limited to): general issues related to family, work, finances, or other non-qualifying circumstances; lack of knowledge about ECP's regulations or procedures; misunderstanding of submission deadlines or examination dates; technical difficulties without maintaining a backup of work.
- (6) Students should first consult with the academic division to determine if a seven-day extension is viable. For situations requiring additional time, a deferral might be sought as per the assessment policy.
- (7) A free format extension request form, accompanied by any supporting evidence, must be submitted to the academic division prior to the assessment deadline, clearly indicating the affected dates and assessments.
- (8) An extension is not in effect until officially approved; students should proceed under the assumption of the original deadline until notification of the extension.

5.2. Consideration of Extension Requests

- (9) The leadership or the academic division reviews extension requests.
- (10) The academic division or leadership may, at their discretion, seek further evidence for extension requests.
- (11) Outcomes of extension requests are communicated to students via email.

6. Assessment Policy

6.1. Objective

- (1) The European College of Polytechnics acknowledges the integral role of assessment in the teaching and learning process, emphasising its commitment to the quality and reliability of assessments, marking, and feedback. This assessment procedure is designed to align with national standards, with verification practices aimed at ensuring consistent, quality, and fair evaluation of student work. It is relevant to all ECP staff and subcontractors involved in assessments, and it complements guidelines from awarding organisations and quality assurance documents.
- (2) The purpose of the procedure is to delineate the rights that students have with respect to verification and assessment in adult and continuing education programmes. It provides adherence to suitable criteria for qualifications and the efficacy of evaluation systems. It entails the implementation of quality control measures, such as sampling and internal verification, as well as the promotion of learner-centred assessment approaches. Furthermore, it underscores the significance of apprising pupils of their entitlements to appeal as well as the repercussions associated with academic dishonesty.

6.2. Responsibilities

- (3) Students are expected to meet all assignment deadlines, submit original work, and fulfil any practical requirements specified by their programmes.
- (4) Tutors and assessors are tasked with providing a clear programme assessment plan, including detailed information about assessments in the course handbook and induction programme. They are also responsible for ensuring that assessments cater to diverse student needs, providing timely and constructive feedback, and adhering to awarding organisation specifications for refereeing evidence towards awards.

6.3. Special Arrangements and Deviations

- (5) ECP provides accommodations for assessments under exceptional circumstances, maintaining a transparent and fair process for all involved. The procedure for handling deviations from assessment regulations includes thorough documentation and a structured approach to addressing breaches of academic integrity, thereby preserving the integrity of the assessment process.

6.4. General Implementation and Verification

- (6) The implementation involves detailed planning for assessing and verifying competencies, emphasising continuous monitoring and improvement. It addresses

conflicts of interest transparently, ensuring all assessment practices are documented, evaluated, and upheld to the highest standards of academic integrity and quality.

- (7) At the European College of Polytechnics, the assessment and internal verification process involves a detailed programme assessment plan that outlines the names of assessors and internal verifiers, along with specific dates for assignment distribution and submission. The plan aims to cover all unit or specification assessment criteria comprehensively and is made accessible to learners through the learning management system (LMS), unless an alternative arrangement is approved by the academic division (AD).
- (8) To monitor student progress effectively, ECP maintains up-to-date records of grades and advancements within the LMS, ensuring transparency and accessibility for both educators and learners. Additionally, the institution provides clear guidance on the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), which includes policies on exemptions and credit transfers, facilitating a fair and equitable assessment landscape.
- (9) The internal verification plan is critical component, identifying specific learners and units for sampling. This ensures that across the board, every unit and every assessor undergoes verification in accordance with the requirements set forth by awarding organisations. To uphold the highest standards of assessment, all assessment briefs, projects, and portfolios are subjected to internal verification before being released to students.
- (10) ECP emphasises the use of documentation and templates provided by awarding organisations to maintain alignment with established standards and practices. However, in cases where non-standard documentation is necessary, approval from the academic division is sought to ensure compliance and suitability.
- (11) Standardisation meetings, held at least once per term, play a pivotal role in maintaining the uniformity of assessment practices. These meetings leverage materials from awarding organisations and review current student work to ensure assessors and verifiers are calibrated in their judgement and application of criteria.
- (12) Security and confidentiality are paramount in the assessment and verification process. All records related to assessments are stored securely and are accessible only to authorised staff members.

6.5. Electronic Submissions and Feedback to Students

(13) The European College of Polytechnics aligns its electronic submission and feedback protocols with the standards set by awarding organisations. The ECP has embraced technology to facilitate the grading and feedback processes, enabling assessors to evaluate assignments online and communicate feedback through digital platforms. Systems like ‘Canvas by Instructure’ and ‘eskooly’ are utilised, ensuring a secure and verifiable process. To authenticate submissions, both students and staff are required to use electronic signatures, adhering to the formats approved by the ECP in compliance with relevant awarding bodies, thereby guaranteeing the authenticity of the work submitted.

6.6. Conflict of Interest

(14) Identifying potential conflicts of interest is essential for maintaining the integrity of the assessment process and certification. Examples of situations that might be perceived as conflicts of interest include personal relationships between staff and students that could compromise assessment fairness, relationships among staff members that might unduly influence outcomes, or scenarios where the institution’s personnel are enrolled in courses that could affect their impartiality. ECP is committed to transparency and rectitude, requiring staff to disclose any potential conflicts to the academic division before engaging in assessment activities. In cases of identified conflict, ECP seeks authorisation from the leadership division to ensure monitoring and uphold the integrity of the evaluation process. When conflicts involve internal assessments for staff qualifications, increased internal verification measures are implemented, scrutinising assessment and verification processes to ensure they meet the rigorous standards expected by both the college and external quality assurance entities.

6.7. Associated Documents and Monitoring

(15) This policy is interconnected with procedures for academic appeals, recognition of prior learning, and awarding organisation guidelines, forming a holistic approach to assessment and verification. Regular monitoring, reviews, and adaptation based on external feedback are crucial for the policy’s ongoing development, reflecting ECP’s commitment to excellence in academic assessment and verification.

(16) This policy undergoes annual reviews to ensure it remains relevant and effective in fostering an environment of fairness, quality, and academic excellence at ECP.

7. Malpractice and Maladministration Policy

7.1. Purpose of the Policy

- (1) The European College of Polytechnics (ECP) aims to pre-empt and mitigate the effects of malpractice and maladministration to prevent disadvantage to learners, avoid exhaustive investigations, and protect the college's reputation. This policy is designed for pre-emptive action against such incidents and ensures prompt, thorough resolution when they occur.

7.2. Policy Scope

- (2) Applicable to all forms of assessments and their reporting at ECP, this policy mandates all college staff to actively prevent and report any incidents or risks of malpractice and maladministration to the Quality Nominee. The responsibility extends to ensuring that the Quality Nominee informs relevant awarding bodies of any incidents to facilitate corrective action.
- (3) The policy focuses on reducing malpractice and maladministration risks, promoting fairness and consistency in dealing with incidents, and safeguarding the integrity of ECP and its qualifications. It commits to impartial investigations, appropriate sanctioning of proven incidents, and the maintenance of ECP's standards.

7.3. Defining Malpractice

- (4) Malpractice is identified as any deliberate or negligent action that compromises the integrity of the assessment process. Examples include, but are not limited to, plagiarism, collusion, unauthorized material possession during exams, and fabrication of results. Staff malpractice encompasses undue assistance to learners, unauthorised mark alterations, and insecure storage of coursework.

7.4. Defining Maladministration

- (5) Maladministration refers to actions or neglect leading to non-compliance with qualification delivery requirements as specified by awarding organizations. It includes errors and oversights affecting the administration of qualifications.

7.5. Roles and responsibilities

- (6) The leadership division ensures that academic integrity is central to the ECP's ethos.
- (7) The academic division is responsible for reporting incidents to leadership division as well as the awarding bodies.
- (8) Teaching staff are tasked with educating learners on malpractice risks and maintaining academic standards.
- (9) Internal verifiers conduct malpractice checks as part of their verification work.

(10) Heads of academic division manage investigations and report on academic misconduct.

Students are expected to submit own original work and adhere to the ECP's policies.

7.5. Investigation Process

(11) Investigations into malpractice and maladministration are conducted confidentially and impartially, respecting the rights of the individuals involved. The process involves secure evidence retention, fair assessment of incidents, and the formulation of action plans to address and rectify identified issues.

8. Policy for the Recognition of Prior Learning

8.1. Scope and Purpose

(1) The European College of Polytechnics values the diverse learning paths individuals take before joining its academic community. Through Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), ECP acknowledges and grants formal academic credit for previous educational achievements and real-world experiences. This document elaborates on the four primary pathways to RPL at ECP: Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL), Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL), Accreditation of Prior Certificated Learning (APCL), and Advanced Standing. Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) refers to recognising formal education that has been previously assessed and resulted in qualifications or partial credits. This pathway enables individuals who may not meet the conventional entry requirements to access ECP's educational programmes, leveraging their past academic efforts. Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL) acknowledges the learning gained through work, life, and business experiences. Unlike APL, APEL focuses on informal learning that hasn't been formally certified, allowing individuals to demonstrate their acquired skills and knowledge for academic recognition. Accreditation of Prior Certificated Learning (APCL) evaluates previously assessed and certified learning for academic credit. It's particularly relevant for learners seeking to align their formal certifications with ECP's academic standards for progression or entry. Advanced Standing facilitates the transfer of students from other institutions, recognising the completion of similar academic programmes. This agreement respects the individual's prior studies, allowing them to continue their education at ECP without redundancy.

- (2) ECP is dedicated to fostering achievement and personal growth among learners from all walks of life. By implementing RPL, ECP aims to democratise access to education, recognising the value of learning acquired outside traditional academic environments. RPL policy encourages reflective practice, allowing applicants to critically assess and articulate their learning for academic credit.
- (3) ECP's commitment to RPL serves not only to streamline the path to education for diverse learners but also to enrich its academic community with a breadth of experiences and perspectives. By valuing all forms of learning, ECP consistently applies procedures and standards, upholding the integrity of the awards and fulfilling its responsibilities as an educational institution.

8.2. Principles of Recognition of Prior Learning

- (4) Opportunity for Proof: candidates seeking academic credit for their prior learning are provided the chance to demonstrate their knowledge and skills through the RPL process. The eligibility for such credit is determined within the constraints set by the ECP and the partner awarding institutions.
- (5) Record of RPL Credit: when credit is granted through the RPL process, it is distinctly marked on the learner's academic record. This designation aids in programme planning and acknowledges the stage of learning achieved through RPL.
- (6) Alignment with Learning Outcomes: For credit to be allocated to core or specified modules, the demonstrated learning must align with the established learning outcomes of those modules. When such alignment is confirmed, the credit is officially recorded as RPL credit for the relevant module.
- (7) Assessment Standards: The determination of the level and quantity of credit awarded is conducted through established academic quality and assessment standards.
- (8) Academic Judgement: Academic Judgement: Academic discretion underpins all RPL-related decisions. The procedures and results underlying these decisions are both open and transparent, maintaining a rigorous and equitable standard. In the event of any disagreement concerning the credit granted, it shall be resolved via an appeals procedure that is analogous to the one employed by the ECP and its linked awarding bodies.
- (9) Clarity and Support: The application procedure for RPL credit is streamlined to ensure that learners are well-informed and supported. Applicants receive

detailed information and guidance that outlines the processes to follow, the proof types needed, and the resources accessible to them along the process.

8.3. Procedure

- (10) **Determining Eligibility:** the applicant is responsible for deciding whether to pursue accreditation for prior learning (APCL or APEL) or apply for Advanced Standing based on previous academic or experiential learning. Gather all necessary documentation, including certifications, transcripts, portfolios, and reflective evaluations.
- (11) **Application Submission:** the applicant completes the RPL application form. Submit the form along with all relevant evidence of prior learning or experience to the admissions office.
- (12) **Initial Review:** The role of the Academic Division is to conduct a preliminary assessment of the application to ensure the completeness and relevance of the submitted documents. This includes verifying the authenticity of the provided certifications and evaluating the portfolio or reflective statement for experiential learning claims.
- (13) **Detailed Evaluation:** The role of the Academic Division is to perform an in-depth evaluation of the applicant's prior learning against the learning outcomes of the desired programme or specific modules. For APCL, assess the equivalence of certificated learning; for APEL, analyse the experiential learning evidence to determine its academic value; and for Advanced Standing, review previous study credits for transferability.
- (14) **Decision Making:** The role of the Academic Division is to make a decision on the application based on the alignment of prior learning with programme requirements. Consult with the leadership division or awarding bodies as necessary to ensure the decision aligns with academic standards and programme integrity.
- (15) **Communication of the Outcome:** The role of the Academic Division is to inform the applicant of the decision. If the application is successful, provide details on the credit awarded and any conditions attached to the offer of a place in the programme or course.

- (16) Conditional Offer: The role of the Academic Division is, for successful applications, extend a conditional offer to the applicant, specifying any additional requirements or steps needed to finalise enrolment in the programme.
- (17) Final Enrolment: The applicant's responsibility is to accept the offer and fulfil any remaining conditions for enrolment. Complete the registration process to officially become a student at ECP.
- (18) Record and Monitor: The role of the Academic Division is to record the RPL credits awarded on the student's academic record. Monitor the student's progress through the programme to ensure that the RPL process has positively contributed to their academic journey.

9. Student Complaints and Academic Appeals Process

9.1. Scope

- (1) At the European College of Polytechnics, an academic complaint is identified as any specific issue raised by a student regarding the delivery of a course or study programme or related academic services. Additionally, an academic appeal is defined as a formal request to review decisions made by academic entities responsible for overseeing student progress, assessments, and awarding qualifications. Student complaint is considered to be any expression of dissatisfaction with the actions, inaction, or the level of service provided by ECP or its representatives.
- (2) Academic appeal does not challenge the academic judgments of examiners, such as requesting reassessment of submitted work. Appeals are considered under circumstances such as not accounting for serious conditions affecting performance, procedural errors in assessments, or instances of bias or prejudice by examiners.

9.2. Eligibility for Making a Complaint

- (3) Any currently enrolled student can lodge a complaint. ECP aims to resolve complaints and issues swiftly, fairly, and efficiently, encouraging resolution at the informal stage with the involved staff members. The procedure encompasses issues related to student administrative services, the student learning experience, and appeals against the application of regulations. However, it excludes examination results, disciplinary processes, academic offences, and admissions decisions.

9.3. Process and Responsibilities

- (4) Stage One: Informal Resolution. Initially, students are encouraged to discuss their complaint directly with the staff member involved. If the complaint concerns regulation application, it should first be directed to the head of the academic division. This stage may escalate to the staff member's line manager for resolution.
- (5) Stage Two: Formal Complaint. If unresolved at Stage One, the complaint should be formally submitted in writing to the leadership division or the head of student affairs. The complaint must be detailed and supported by evidence. The Head of Student Affairs, or a designated investigator, will review and make a determination.
- (6) Stage Three: Review Stage. Should the complaint remain unresolved, or if procedural flaws are identified, it can be escalated for review by the Complaints Resolution Panel. The panel will review all documentation without the presence of the complainant to ensure an impartial decision.
- (7) Stage four: Completion of the Process and Timeframes. The procedure outlines specific timeframes for lodging complaints and appeals, with a general guideline that issues should be raised within 4 weeks of their occurrence.

9.4. Support and Guidance

- (8) ECP commits to providing support throughout the complaints and appeals process, ensuring students understand their rights and the procedures involved.

10. Equality and Diversity Policy

10.1. Equality and Diversity Ethos Statement

- (1) The European College of Polytechnics is dedicated to fostering equality and diversity in every facet of its operations. ECP strives to create a nurturing environment where every individual is provided the opportunity to reach their utmost potential, surrounded by mutual respect and self-worth. We firmly stand against any form of discrimination or inequality, making this policy a foundational element of our commitment to equality, diversity, and social inclusion.
- (2) Estonian laws and regulations, designed to ensure equal treatment and non-discrimination, guide the ECP's policies. These laws frame the ECP's commitment to a diverse and inclusive environment for students and staff, reflecting an ongoing effort to incorporate equality and diversity within Estonia's legal and societal context.

10.2. Equality and Diversity Objectives

- (3) Commitment to Equality: The ECP is resolved to establish an inclusive academic and workplace setting devoid of discrimination, harassment, or victimisation, addressing protected characteristics and other relevant considerations as defined by Estonian law.
- (4) Comprehensive Protection: Protection against discrimination spans beyond traditional characteristics to encompass social status, economic circumstances, refugee status, and more, recognising the diverse makeup of the community.
- (5) Implementation and Compliance: Adherence to Estonian legislation on equality and diversity is paramount, with proactive policies to challenge discrimination and enhance equal opportunities.

10.3. Scope and Implementation

- (6) Institutional Responsibility: Governance holds the ultimate responsibility for the endorsement and oversight of this policy, ensuring comprehensive applicability across the institution.
- (7) Responsibilities within the Institution: Defined roles within the organisational framework underscore the collective effort in promoting and actualising equality and diversity initiatives.
- (8) Promotion of Equality and Diversity: Efforts are made to mirror the community's diversity through fair practices in recruitment, selection, and admissions, aiming to bridge disparities in student achievements.
- (9) Policy Against Discrimination: Discriminatory actions against students or staff trigger decisive actions aimed at rectification and prevention of future instances.

10.4. Monitoring and reviewing

- (10) Ongoing Monitoring: Regular monitoring ensures the policy's adaptability and relevance as educational and employment practices evolve within Estonia.
- (11) Annual Review: Benchmarking data informs continuous assessments, maintaining the policy's responsiveness to changes both internally and externally.

10.5. Promotion and awareness

- (12) Staff Training: Initial inductions and continuous training sessions are conduits for integrating the policy's principles into the institution's ethos.

- (13) Student Engagement: From induction onwards, students are immersed in equality and diversity education, supplemented by tutorial programs and accessible policy documentation.

11. Staff Development Policy

11.1. Scope

- (1) The European College of Polytechnics is committed to the continuous professional and personal development of its staff, recognising the vital role each individual plays within their specific departments and the institution as a whole. The dynamic nature of internal and external changes necessitates a flexible approach to development opportunities for all employees.
- (2) This policy applies universally to all employees under a contractual agreement with the European College of Polytechnics.

11.2. Support Mechanisms

- (3) Development Scheme: This annual process is a cornerstone for identifying learning and development needs and engaging all staff in a reflective practice aimed at enhancing current role performance.
- (4) Internal Development Resources: Preference is given to utilising internal resources for staff development, including degree programmes and short courses. Any costs associated with these opportunities will be transparent at the time of enrolment.

11.3. Key Principles

- (5) Self-Responsibility: Staff members bear the primary responsibility for their own development. However, this is supported by the collaborative efforts of line managers, department heads, faculty management teams, and the institution's leadership to provide relevant learning opportunities that align with ECP's goals.
- (6) Equality and Access: Equal access to development opportunities is a fundamental right for all staff. The opportunities provided aim to: enhance role-specific knowledge and skills, improving effectiveness in current positions; and support personal and career development through the enhancement of personal and interpersonal skills.
- (7) Staff Development: It encompasses a wide range of learning activities designed to update and improve workplace skills, knowledge, and abilities. Valuable outcomes are expected from various forms of learning, including formal courses, conferences, mentoring, collaborative projects, job shadowing, and individual study.

- (8) **Mandatory Training:** In certain cases, training or development programmes may be mandated by line managers or the institution itself. These programmes are designed to benefit both the individual and the European College of Polytechnics.

11.4. Implementation

- (9) All staff members must actively participate in development activities and receive institutional assistance to make these opportunities a reality for this policy to be successfully implemented. The European College of Polytechnics is committed to providing a supportive and ever-changing setting for professional development by regularly assessing development needs and the efficacy of offered programmes.

12. Health and Safety Policy

12.1. Scope

- (1) The European College of Polytechnics adopts this health and safety policy with the aim of ensuring a safe and healthy environment for its community members, including staff, students, and visitors. This policy facilitates ECP's operation by safeguarding the health, safety, and wellbeing of all individuals involved in its activities.
- (2) This policy encompasses all employees, students, contractors, and visitors at ECP.
- (3) Occupational health and safety refer to the practices, procedures, and regulations designed to prevent accidents, injuries, or illnesses in educational settings, ensuring a safe working and learning environment for everyone.

12.2. Competence, Training, and Briefing

- (4) At ECP, competence in health and safety matters is achieved through targeted training, preparing individuals to manage health and safety issues effectively. Accessibility considerations ensure that ECP's facilities and services are accessible to individuals with disabilities, promoting equal opportunities for all.

12.3. Policy Framework

12.3.1. Principles

- (5) **Commitment Statement:** ECP prioritises the health and safety of its community. This policy is a testament to ECP's commitment to creating a safe environment where educational and administrative activities can be conducted harmlessly.
- (6) **Vision and Ambitions:** ECP aspires to cultivate a robust health and safety culture, aiming for sector-leading performance and a safe environment, ensuring no activities result in harm, injury, or ill health.

12.3.2. Policy Statement

- (7) ECP is committed to maintaining health and safety standards, adhering to the Occupational Health and Safety Act, and fulfilling its responsibilities to all community members. This includes effective risk management, competence in health and safety, and fostering a culture of continuous improvement and proactive risk management.

12.3.3. Roles and responsibilities

- (8) Governing Council: The ultimate responsibility for health and safety lies with the ECP's governing body, ensuring that health and safety strategies align with institutional goals.
- (9) Executive Board: The Executive Board oversees operational decisions, integrating health and safety considerations into strategic planning and policy implementation.
- (10) Health and Safety Committee: Chaired by an independent appointee, this committee monitors ECP's health and safety performance, advising on policy directions and ensuring compliance with Estonian health and safety regulations.
- (11) Director of Health and Safety: Accountable for professional health and safety advice and policy development, this role is central to ECP's health and safety governance, ensuring the institution's adherence to national standards.

12.3.4. Implementation

- (12) Communication and Training: ECP ensures that all community members are informed about and trained in health and safety practices, fostering a culture of safety and responsibility.

12.3.5. Monitoring and Reviewing

- (13) Continuous Monitoring: ECP commits to regular monitoring and review of its health and safety practices, ensuring alignment with Estonian legal standards and best practices.
- (14) Governance: ECP's Health and Safety Policy is integral to its governance structure, ensuring that health and safety considerations are central to institutional decision-making and operational practices. This policy is communicated through ECP's induction programmes, internal communications, and the ECP's website, ensuring widespread awareness and compliance.

13. Data Protection Policy

13.1. Compliance

- (1) The European College of Polytechnics (ECP) adheres to the principles of data protection as outlined in the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). The GDPR mandates a higher level of transparency and accountability in the handling of personal data, enhancing the rights of individuals to control their own information. This policy underscores ECP's commitment to safeguarding the personal data of its community, including students, staff, and other stakeholders, aligning with both the GDPR and the relevant Estonian Act.
- (2) This policy is binding for all individuals associated with ECP, including employees, students, and contractors. External partners and third-party service providers engaged with ECP are also expected to comply with this policy, ensuring the confidentiality and integrity of personal data.

13.2. Purpose

- (3) ECP processes personal data for various operational needs, such as staff recruitment and remuneration, academic administration, student enrolment, and legal compliance with educational and governmental bodies. The GDPR obligates ECP to handle this information responsibly, ensuring fairness, security, and lawful processing.

13.3. Responsibilities

- (4) ECP acts as the data controller, overseeing the processing of personal data within the institution. The Data Protection Officer (DPO), appointed by ECP, is responsible for monitoring compliance with data protection laws, addressing inquiries, and ensuring data security. An appointed governance body oversees the implementation and adherence to this policy.

13.4. Data Protection Principles

- (5) ECP commits to the GDPR's principles by ensuring personal data is: Processed lawfully, fairly, and transparently; collected for specified, explicit, and legitimate purposes; adequate, relevant, and limited to what is necessary; accurate and kept up-to-date; retained only as long as necessary; processed in a manner that ensures appropriate security.

13.5. Disclosure of Data

- (6) ECP limits the disclosure of personal data to circumstances where it is legally permitted or required, or when the individual has provided explicit consent.

Legitimate disclosures may include academic purposes, legal obligations, or for the protection and security of the ECP community.

12.6. Publication of Information

- (7) ECP may publish certain personal data for academic or promotional purposes. Individuals have the right to opt out of such publications, and ECP provides mechanisms for individuals to exercise this right.

12.7. Email Communication

- (8) ECP recognises that email communications may be subject to data protection and freedom of information laws. A disclaimer will be included in ECP's email system to inform users of this possibility.

12.8. CCTV Surveillance

- (9) ECP may employ CCTV surveillance for security purposes, compliant with GDPR and Estonian laws. The use of CCTV footage is strictly regulated, ensuring the privacy rights of individuals are respected.

12.9. Monitoring and Reviewing

- (10) This policy will be regularly reviewed and updated to reflect changes in legislation and best practices in data protection. ECP is committed to maintaining the highest standards of data protection and privacy for all its stakeholders.

14. Distance Learning Policy

14.1 Definitions

- (1) The European College of Polytechnics establishes this Distance Learning (DL) Policy to govern the educational offerings leading to an award or part thereof, which are delivered, supported, and/or assessed through methods not requiring students' attendance at scheduled classes or events. This policy is in harmony with educational standards and complies with all relevant regulations and guidelines for distance education.
- (2) Distance learning at ECP offers a versatile educational framework that accommodates various learning dynamics through digital and traditional modalities. This approach is designed to bridge the geographical gap between educators and learners, including advisors and research students, leveraging technology to facilitate both synchronous (real-time) and asynchronous (delayed) interactions.

Asynchronous Distance Learning. Asynchronous DL stands out as an educational strategy that permits students to partake in learning activities without the necessity

of being physically present in conventional settings such as classrooms. This model promotes autonomy among learners, allowing them to engage with course materials at their own pace. The asynchronous format employs digital tools and resources, including: (a) Online platforms for content delivery and interaction (b) Paper-based materials and digital content distributed through mail (c) Telephonic support for individual guidance.

In this setup, educators assign tasks and provide feedback through electronic means, thus eliminating the need for direct physical contact. Within this method enables students to study remotely, making education accessible regardless of the learners' location.

Synchronous Online Learning and Blended Approaches. Conversely, synchronous online learning at ECP facilitates real-time interaction between instructors and students, fostering a dynamic and interactive learning environment. This mode can be seamlessly integrated into blended learning strategies, which combine the benefits of in-person and digital education. Blended learning is characterised by: (a) Periodic direct interactions between educators and students within a physical classroom setting (b) Engagement with digital content and assessments outside the classroom environment.

This hybrid approach offers an educational experience that capitalises on the strengths of both distance learning and traditional, in-person teaching methods. By incorporating elements of online education, blended learning supports a mixed methodology that enriches the learning experience while accommodating diverse learner needs and preferences.

14.2. Quality Assurance and Development of DL Programmes

14.2.1. General Principle

- (3) ECP ensures that students engaged in DL receive an educational experience equivalent to that of their peers on campus, fostering clear expectations and responsibilities among all involved parties.

14.2.2. Approval of the DL Provision

- (4) DL courses or programmes at ECP must exhibit the same quality standards as traditional programs. During the validation process, DL courses or programmes must demonstrate their ability to meet students' needs effectively. Key considerations for programme validation include: management of learning experiences, relevance and reliability of digital platforms, staff training and

competencies, student support mechanisms; contingency plans for technological failures.

14.2.3. Student Engagement and Annual Monitoring

(5) DL courses or programmes undergo the same rigorous annual monitoring and evaluation processes as traditional courses or programmes, with specific attention to students' remote learning experiences. Any issues identified must be addressed promptly, with contingency plans in place for technological or access-related challenges.

14.3. Expectations of ECP, Staff, and Students

14.3.1. For DL courses or programmes, ECP ensures:

(6) ECP ensures a reliable and secure delivery system, high-quality study materials, adequate contingency plans, designated contacts for academic feedback, clear communication regarding programme delivery and assessment schedules.

14.3.2. ECP's collaborative partners commit to:

(7) ECP's collaborative partners commit to ensuring staff supporting DL learners have the necessary skills and training, providing remote access to student support services, where feasible, confirming the authenticity of students' assessed work.

14.3.3. Students are expected to:

(8) ECP's students are expected to maintain consistent, secure internet access and meet technical requirements, arrange personal IT support, familiarise themselves with basic computing terms and instructions, engage actively with the learning materials and delivery methods, adhere to the programme's delivery and assessment timelines.

14.3. Admission, Enrolment, and Induction

(9) Admission Requirements: Applicants must meet the course's or programme's entry requirements and may need to: ensure access to the necessary technology, agree to supervisory arrangements, demonstrate access to the required academic facilities.

(10) Enrolment: DL course or programme enrolment is facilitated online or via post, tailored to meet distance learners' needs.

(11) Induction: An online induction introduces DL students to essential resources and platforms. ECP provides comprehensive digital resources to orient students to distance learning, ensuring they are well-prepared for their educational journey.

14.4. Monitoring and Reviewing

- (12) This policy, which is in accordance with the applicable legislation and the educational goals of ECP, emphasises the organisation's dedication to providing high-quality remote education, ensuring equity and access for all students, and revising and motivating itself accordingly.

15. Fee and Refund Policy

15.1. Overview of Fees

- (1) Application Fee: Charged for each application submission, this non-refundable fee covers processing and administrative expenses.
- (2) Previous Qualification Verification Fee: Imposed to authenticate the qualifications provided during application, ensuring the integrity of the admissions process, this fee is non-refundable.
- (3) Tuition Fees: Encompass the cost of enrolment and participation in academic programs, facilitating access to quality education, learning resources, and college support services.
- (4) Certification Fees: Applicable upon the successful completion of a program, addressing the costs associated with issuing diplomas and official academic transcripts.
- (5) Courier Fees: For students requesting document delivery via courier, this fee covers secure packaging and expedited shipping costs.
- (6) Other Administrative Fees: It may include charges for late registration, special examinations, or supplementary academic support, covering related administrative costs.

15.2. Refund Procedure

- (7) ECP adheres to a strict no-refund policy for all financial transactions, including but not limited to application, verification, tuition, certification, courier, and administrative fees. Payment of these fees signifies acknowledgement and acceptance of this policy.
- (8) Rationale for the No-Refund Policy: Immediately upon receipt, fees are allocated towards providing educational services, compensating faculty, and maintaining facilities, underlining the principle of resource allocation. This setup encourages students and their families to engage in careful financial planning before making a commitment, ensuring they are prepared for the financial responsibilities of

education. Moreover, the process of issuing refunds incurs significant administrative efforts, detracting from the primary mission of education and thus underscoring the importance of administrative efficiency in managing resources effectively.

15.3. Important Considerations

- (9) Students are urged to carefully review the fee and refund policy, assessing their financial readiness prior to application or enrolment.
- (10) In situations of significant hardship or exceptional circumstances, the ECP remains open for discussion. Although the no-refund policy is upheld, potential guidance or alternative support options may be explored.
- (11) Prompt fee payment is crucial; failure to comply with payment schedules could lead to additional charges or academic consequences.