



INSTITUTE
FOR THE
PUBLIC SERVICES

IPS POLICY FRAMEWORK

**BINDING STANDARDS GOVERNING
PARTICIPATION IN IPS COURSES AND
PROGRAMMES**

VERSION: 1.1
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Binding Standards governing Participation in IPS Courses and Programmes

1.0 Preamble

- 1.1 The purpose of this document is to formalise the responsibilities related with the participation of Public Officers of all grades in courses and programmes offered by the Institute for the Public Services (IPS) which is the academy serving the training and development requirements of the Public Service in Malta.
- 1.2 The aim of this document is to ensure that standards are maintained and rigour is ensured in the administration and delivery of the training and development courses and programmes delivered by IPS. The variability in the type, duration, mode of delivery and academic level of the courses delivered by IPS demand the need to implement and enforce common standards in order to assist both course participant and their management to have a clear and smooth training pathway.

2.0 Applicability

- 2.1 These standards govern the participation of Public Officers to the courses and programmes offered by the IPS. Apart from the responsibilities of the individual Public Officer, this document outlines the obligations and responsibilities of the management of the entity or ministry of origin of the Public Officer.
- 2.2 Besides the courses and programmes listed in the official IPS Prospectus, these conditions also apply by default for customised training programmes organised on a 'ad hoc' basis for ministries and entities unless specific conditions are drawn up between IPS and the requesting ministry or entity.
- 2.3 Whilst the term 'Public Officer' is used throughout these standards to define course participants, in the event that course participants are not Public Officers but are employees of Public Sector entities and organisations, the same principles and standards shall apply.
- 2.4 The date of entry into force of these conditions is the first of October 2021.

3.0 General Principles

- 3.1 The Public Service is firmly committed to being inclusive, people-centric, quality- and service-oriented. A fundamental element of this commitment lies in offering Public Officers opportunities for career progression and self-development. Public managers are responsible for identifying, promoting and facilitating the development of the officers falling under their remit.
- 3.2 Participation in the courses and programmes offered by IPS is an inclusive experience which involves not only the Public Officer enrolled in the training and development process but also ministry or entity in which he or she is posted. Consequently, management or – in the cases of service-wide programmes – the authority which has directly nominated the Public Officer to be enrolled in the course or programme.
- 3.3 Students are expected to seek the approval of their superior prior to enrolling in courses/programs offered by IPS as specified in Annex I of Directive 8.1¹. Annex I of Directive 8.1 also specifies that such prior authorisation is not required for applicants who are on Scale 5 upwards.

¹ Page 11 of Annex I of Directive 8.1 - <https://publicservice.gov.mt/en/people/Documents/Directives/Directive-8-1-Annex-I.pdf>

Course participation is a firm commitment on both the Public Officers and their management. Once enrolment is confirmed, Public Officers are obliged to honour their commitment and their participation becomes compulsory regardless of whether the course or programme applied for is itself mandatory or not.

- 3.4 Before Ministries, entities or officers' superiors forward nominations for training to IPS (where applicable) it is to be ensured that officers are informed of the nomination and that IPS shall be communicating with them directly regarding their course participation. Nominated officers are also to be informed that they are required to attend such courses. In the event that a Public Officer does not confirm his or her attendance to a course or programme once he or she is contacted by IPS, or fails to attend on the date assigned with no justified reason, then IPS shall remove this officer from the reserve list.
- 3.5 In evaluating the extent of the commitment to participate in a course or programme, both the Public Officer and management should factor time needed to review the course material, preparation for assessments or formulation of assignments as may be necessary according to the individual course or programme and which are over and above the physical attendance to the course or programme sessions.
- 3.6 Participation in IPS courses entails an adherence to the standards of behaviour and conduct which all Public Officers are mandated to follow in the execution of their duties and, therefore, any breach may lead to consequences according to established procedure.

4.0 Eligibility Criteria

- 4.1 IPS programmes and courses are open for public officers meeting specific eligibility criteria which are dependent on the type and scope of the individual offerings. IPS shall reject any application which does not meet any eligibility criteria unless there is a written case drawn up by senior management which would then be reviewed by IPS.

5.0 Enrolment

- 5.1 Following any applicable prior approval by management as specified in Article 3.3, Public Officers may enrol directly to the various programmes offered by IPS through the Prospectus page within the IPS website. The enrolment process involves selecting from the provided dates in which the Public Officer would be available to attend the course.
- 5.2 The maximum number of course participants is pre-set: In case prospective applicants find no available slots, they may submit their interest and IPS will revert in case of any freeing up of slots or if IPS schedules new sessions.
- 5.3 In the case of specific mandatory programmes – such as those related to induction of newly employed public officers – the enrolment would be carried out directly by IPS following the receipt of course attendees from the nominating authorities responsible for recruitment.
- 5.4 Under all instances, in the event that a Public Officer does not confirm his or her attendance to a course or programme once he or she is contacted by IPS, or fails to attend on the date assigned with no justified reason, then IPS shall consider this officer to no longer be interested and remove the officer from the reserve list.

6.0 Attendance

- 6.1 Upon confirmation of enrolment, course participants are expected to attend according to the course schedule for which they applied. The attendance for the established minimum number of sessions is mandatory and failure to attend may result in a referral to management and a termination of participation to the course.
- 6.2 Regardless of whether the session is provided in-person or online, course participant are to be present on-time and for the duration of the session. In any case, course participants should be attentive and not be distracted during the course of the session. In the event that the session is provided online, failure to switch on the camera will result in participants being marked as absent.
- 6.3 In the event of being unable to attend due to 'force majeure' or other serious, documented reason, course participants are to inform IPS beforehand by email copying their superior officer stating the reason for their absence. Rescheduling to an alternative date is subject to availability and at IPS's discretion. Failure to inform IPS beforehand, the participant will be considered as no longer interested in completing the course.

7.0 Cancellation and Rescheduling

- 7.1 IPS may be compelled to cancel or reschedule courses or programmes due to circumstances of 'force majeure' or any other contingency. In this event, IPS shall inform course participants of any rescheduling arrangements.

8.0 Assessment

- 8.1 The successful participation to courses or programmes offered by IPS may include obtaining a passing grade in assessments which may take the form of written assignments, timed multiple-question test and other forms of evaluation. It is the responsibility of participants to ensure they are duly prepared for the tests and to meet deadlines. Failure to meet submission deadlines will automatically result in a failing mark.
- 8.2 In the event of a failed mark in tests or assignments, participants may either be offered a resit or to reapply for the course depending on the specific conditions applicable to the course or programme.

9.0 Certification and Training Records

- 9.1 Upon successful completion of courses and programmes, course participants shall be issued a certificate in digital format through the Blockcerts platform. Course participants shall be notified and instructed via email on how to proceed to receive the digital certificate.
- 9.2 In addition to digital certificates, all Public Officers holding an official CORP intranet access may access at any time details of the courses attended and completed at IPS through the 'My Personal Kiosk' site.