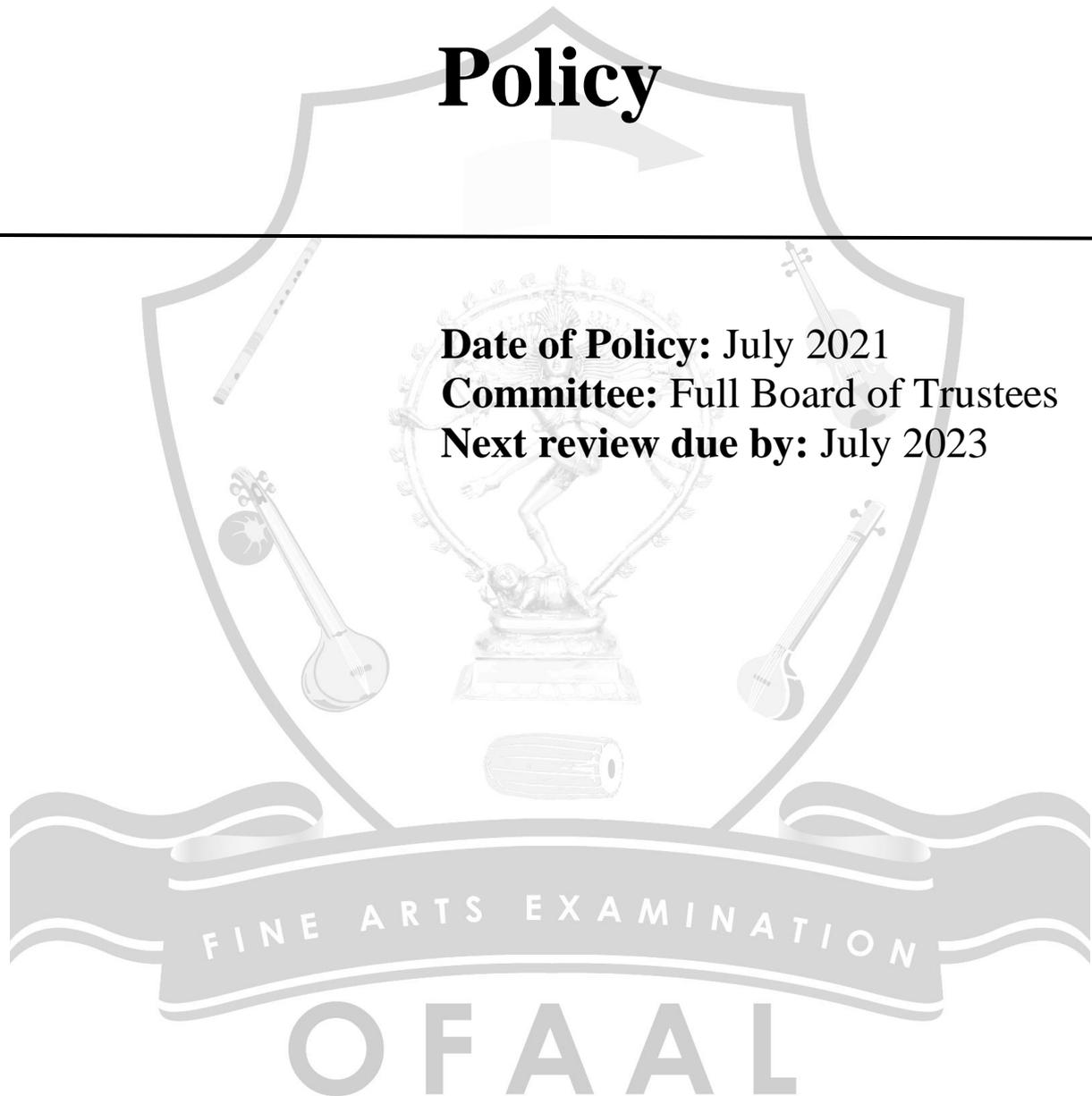# Quality Assurance Policy

Date of Policy: July 2021
Committee: Full Board of Trustees
Next review due by: July 2023

OFAAL will ensure that the policy is applied fairly to all employees and does not have a negative impact in relation to OFAAL's equality strands: race, sex, religion and belief, sexual orientation, age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership and pregnancy and maternity.

Quality Assurance

Quality assurance is an integral part of OFAAL's examination process. OFAAL strives to maintain excellence in delivering examinations and training to all candidates at the highest possible standard. As such, all individuals of OFAAL go through a rigorous training for understanding the notion of quality assurance relating to the following:

a)   Examination Syllabus,

b)   Examiners,

c)   Practical examinations

d)   Theory examinations,

e)   Marking Process, and

f)   Centre Administration and Facilitation.

Examination Syllabus

All exam syllabi are periodically reviewed by the subject-level experts, exam committee and members of trustees, to ensure that the standards are maintained, relevant, and up to date. OFAAL regularly organises workshops for all teachers and examiners to update them about latest developments, and to disseminate any changes in the syllabus, learning outcomes and examination formats. OFAAL also organises seminars and training camps for teachers.

Examiners

Quality assurance around examiners are centred around rigorous training to ensure that examiners are fully familiar with the process of examination and to conduct themselves in an unbiased, fair manner under all circumstances. More specifically, special attention is given to new examiners. All new examiners are trained by at least two members of the exam committee on marking and examination techniques. They are also requested to shadow a seasoned examiner as a trainee examiner for at least for two exams. Once trained, a member of the trustees or exam committee will observe their first few exams to ensure that the expectations around quality assurance are met.

Monitoring and Standardisation of Exams and Examiners

In addition to this, OFAAL will ensure that all examinations are conducted with high standards, through several avenues, including a) spot-check-based monitoring of examiners, b) unannounced inspections of examination centres, c) standardisation of marking (see "Marking Process" below). Usually, (a) and (b) are expected to be covered together, such as ensuring the identity of the examiner, allocated versus assigned examination rooms, and validation of students in exam rooms for a given centre. This will also expand to ensure that examiners

following stipulated examination guide, questions, ordering of them (when verbal), and reflective nature of the marks therein.

Practical / Theory examinations

In addition to the training for examiners, as outlined above, all practical and theory examinations are visited by members of the exam committee, trustees, or independent inspectors, in an unannounced manner to perform spot inspections, to ensure that the process across a number of exams are invariant, and to ensure that the standards are maintained without any partiality or biasness.

Development of Theory Examinations

For each planned examination, OFAAL appoints an examination officer, who will oversee the overall process. Examination questions towards a planned exam must be submitted by the appropriate member of the music committee to the examination officer two months prior to the examination. The questions are expected to be adhere to the syllabus and expected not to deviate from standard patterns, but at the same time not verbosely repeating similar questions. In the verification process, the examination officer may return the questions to the examiner for changes. Once the final changes are made, the internal examination officer consults an external examiner (who are musicians outside OFAAL) to verify the standard of the questions against the level and may enforce additional changes internally. This two-step process ensures that theory exams developed inside OFAAL are fair, and standardised.

Marking process

All markings are conducted under reasonably regulated conditions (such as marks are expected at the end of the examination for practical examinations). OFAAL also performs statistical analysis (across seasons, centres, examination rooms, candidate groups, and examiners) to ensure that reasonable efforts are given towards benchmarking and to identify any anomalies, if any. These statistics are a major drive in understanding dynamics, and requirements between areas, countries and age groups.

In addition to these, for exams focussed on theoretical aspects, a subset of papers (for each grade and subject) is marked by a second examiner to ensure that the process is not marginalised.

All marks are electronically registered and processed before conducting overall analysis. This includes error checking, verification of correct entries, and correlation of marks between examiners for each candidate. This automated process eliminates a number of issues, which are bound to happen if this were to be carried out manually.

Centre Administration and Facilitation.

Exam centre coordinators play a crucial role in OFAAL exams, and as such, their role is considered to be pivotal. Hence, exam centre coordinators are invited to observe exams across at least two centres before being confirmed as an exam centre coordinator. Again, members of trustees conduct spot inspections to ensure that their operations are fair and adhering to the expectations of OFAAL.

Data Protection and Confidentiality

In line with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), all personal data collected will be stored securely in accordance with the OFAAL Data Protection Policy and Privacy Statement. Only authorised personnel will have access to this data.