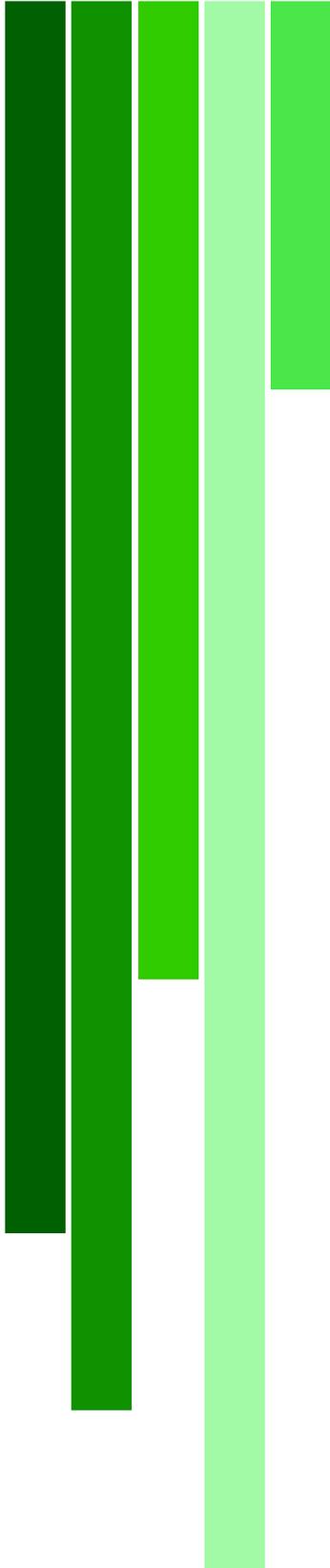


MANUAL FOR CONDUCTING INSTITUTIONAL AUDIT

2017



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30 January 2017



Maldives Qualifications Authority
Ministry of Education
Republic of Maldives

Contents

1. Introduction	2
2. Standard Operating Procedure for Conducting Institutional Audit.....	4
2.1 Purpose	4
2.2 Scope.....	4
2.3 Responsibility	4
2.4 MQA’s Role in Conducting the Institutional Audit.....	5
2.5 Flowchart: Institutional Audit	11
3. Procedure for Conducting Institutional Self-Evaluation	12
3.1 Introduction	12
3.2 Overview of the Institutional Audit	12
3.3 Overview of the Institutional Audit Criteria.....	13
3.4 Steps for Conducting the Self-Evaluation	14
Related Documents.....	20
4 Procedure for Conducting the External Review.....	21
4.1 Introduction	21
4.2 Overview of the Institutional Audit	21
4.3 Overview of the Institutional Audit Criteria.....	22
4.4 Steps for Conducting the External Review.....	23
Appendix I: Institutional Audit Criteria.....	28
Appendix II: Self-Evaluation Assessment Form	32
Appendix III: External Review Panel’s Assessment Form.....	61
Appendix IV: External Review Panel Report Format	90

1. Introduction

The Maldives Qualifications Authority (MQA) has endorsed a set of Guidelines for Institutional Audit in 2016. This manual is developed to assist the process of conducting Institutional Audit of higher education institutions (HEIs) and it includes the following:

1. A Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for conducting Institutional Audit, developed as guidelines for MQA staff members.
2. Procedure for Conducting Institutional Self-Evaluation, developed as guidelines for HEIs.
3. Procedure for Conducting External Review, developed as guidelines for External Review Panel members.

Institutional Audit is an activity in which a HEI is assessed in terms of a set of established criteria, as well as against the achievements of its own mission. According to the Guidelines for Institutional Audit, participation in the Institutional Audit process is an obligation for all HEIs operating in the Maldives. Institutional Auditing will be conducted on a five-year cycle.

The purposes of MQA's Institutional Audit are:

1. To recognize the strengths of HEIs operations and academic quality.
2. To further strengthen operations and academic quality by making relevant recommendations for future improvement.

Important characteristics of the Institutional Audit process are:

1. It is not a process that simply results in a yes/ no decision. Rather, it is a process based on the principle of continuous quality enhancement, with the motivation to further enhance the operations of the HEI.
2. It is a collaborative effort undertaken by HEIs with MQA, based on mutual respect and cooperation.
3. It is conducted at the systems level by considering policies, processes and procedures.
4. It is based on the concept of peer-review; the members of the External Review Panel will include those with experience in higher education and will base their review on the Self-Evaluation conducted by the relevant HEI.
5. It will take diversity of institutions into account, and the outcomes of the process is expected to relate to the size, structure and nature (public or private) of the respective HEI.
6. It is based on values of transparency and excellence.
7. It is designed to follow internationally accepted good practices in quality assurance.

The MQA's Institutional Audit consists of the following two key components:

Self-Evaluation

This is a process undertaken internally by the HEI. This document provides guidelines to facilitate Self-Evaluation. The final product of the Self-Evaluation will be the Self-Evaluation Report (SER).

External Review

This is a process conducted by an external Review Panel. This Panel will be appointed by MQA in consultation with the respective HEI. The Review Panel will be provided with Guidelines for conducting the External Review.

2. Standard Operating Procedure for Conducting Institutional Audit

2.1 Purpose

The purpose of this Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) is to assist the MQA staff to conduct the Institutional Audit of HEIs. The steps in this SOP are meant to provide consistency in the process of conducting the Institutional Audit.

2.2 Scope

This SOP covers the following aspects of the Institutional Audit process:

1. Process of initiating the Institutional Audit
2. Tasks of MQA staff in facilitating the Self-Evaluation of the HEI
3. Tasks of MQA staff in facilitating the External Review
4. MQA's process in taking decisions and follow up actions on Review Panel Report

2.3 Responsibility

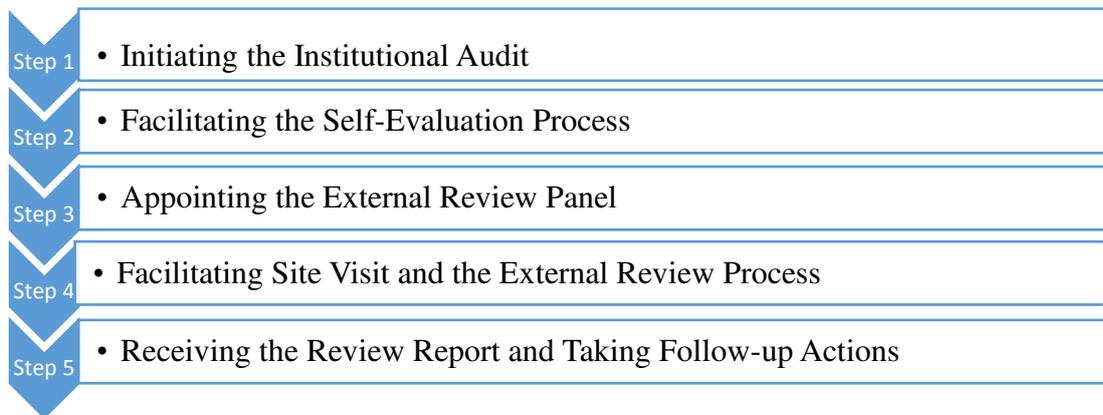
The MQA will bear the overall responsibility of implementing this SOP. MQA will appoint a senior management staff as the Focal Point for facilitating the Institutional Audit process. MQA will also appoint a staff member to each External Review Panel to undertake the secretariat functions who will also act as a Panel member.

The primary responsibility of conducting the Self-Evaluation process will be upon the HEI. The CEO of the respective HEI is expected to play a lead role in the Self-Evaluation process.

The Chair of the External Review Panel (appointed by MQA), together with other Panel members, will take the primary responsibility of conducting the External Review process and developing the External Review Report of the HEI.

2.4 MQA's Role in Conducting the Institutional Audit

MQA's role in the Institutional Audit process will consist of the following steps.



Detailed tasks under each step, with instructions and timelines, are provided below.

Step 1: Initiating Institutional Audit

Task	Instructions	Responsibility	Timeline
Select the HEIs for Institutional Audit	Select batches of 5 to 10 HEIs for Institutional Audit at a given time.	MQA management with MQA Board's endorsement	Week 1
Designate the MQA Focal Point for the Institutional Audit process	Select a senior management staff as the Focal Point of the Institutional Audit process.	CEO	Week 1
Send Institutional Audit Initiation Letter to the HEIs	<p>The letter should request:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To select a Liaison Officer from the HEI for the Institutional Audit 2. To send relevant staff for Self-Evaluation training <p>It should also:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Invite the HEI to begin the Self-Evaluation process 4. Inform the deadline for submission of the Self-Evaluation Report. 5. Inform the HEI that an External Review process will followed after the Self-Evaluation. 6. Include the Procedure for Self-Evaluation, with related Appendices. 	CEO/ MQA Management	Week 2
Invite potential External Review Panel Members	Identify and invite potential Review Panel members to form a roster of Review Panel members. Expertise from HEIs, locally and internationally, could be invited since the Institutional Audit is guided by the principle of peer review. Keeping this roster up to date and seeking potential Review Panel members will be an ongoing process.	CEO	Week 2 & 3

Step 2: Facilitating the Self-Evaluation Process

Task	Instructions	Responsibility	Timeline
Conduct training of the HEI staff in the Self-Evaluation process	The Procedure for Self-Evaluation and its related appendices should be the primary materials used in the training. The training provided should (1) clarify the key concepts and terms (2) explain data/evidence to collect for self-evaluation, and (3) introduce the entire Procedure for Self-Evaluation. It should include practical exercises on how to complete the Self-Evaluation Assessment Form (see Appendix II).	MQA staff and Focal Point	Week 3&4 Self-Evaluation of HEI should begin at this point.
Meet with CEO (or nominee) to follow up on progress.	The MQA Focal Point should visit and meet the CEO of the respective HEI to follow up on the Self-Evaluation process to ensure that the Self-Evaluation process has begun and to provide clarification or assistance as required.	Focal Point	Week 5 HEI will undertake Self-Evaluation in Weeks 6 through 18 (approximately 4 months)
Send Reminder Letter	The letter should remind the HEI of the approaching deadline to submit the Self-Evaluation Report and outline the process of External Review as the next step.	Focal Point	Week 10
Receive Self-Evaluation Report	Check if Self-Evaluation Report is submitted in both soft and hard copy formats. Review the Report against the format requested. Provide 3 days to bring minor format changes.	Focal Point	Week 19 / 20 Submission at end of Week 20

Step 3: Appointing the External Review Panel and Preparing for the External Review

Task	Instructions	Responsibility	Timeline
Select an External Review Panel for each respective HEI.	Select 3 to 5 members for each Panel. Select a staff of MQA as one of the members. Appoint a Chair of the Panel, who should not be the MQA staff member.	CEO	Week 20
Send invitation letters to the External Review Panel members.	This letter should include <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Compensation rate 2. Timeline of the respective External Review 3. HEI to be reviewed 4. Sample Review Panel Member Contract 5. Sample Declaration of Non-Conflict of Interest 6. Sample Non-Disclosure Statement 7. Guidelines for External Review with relevant appendices (Appendix I, 3 & 4) 	CEO	Week 20
Hold the Initiation Meeting of the Review Panel.	The meeting will include signing of: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Declaration of Non-Conflict of Interest 2. Non-Disclosure Statement 3. Review Panel Member Contract Provide the relevant Self-Evaluation Report of the HEI, after signing the above documents. This meeting should focus on planning the schedule and timeline of the External Review process.	Focal Point & Chair of Panel	Week 21 Review Panel work begins

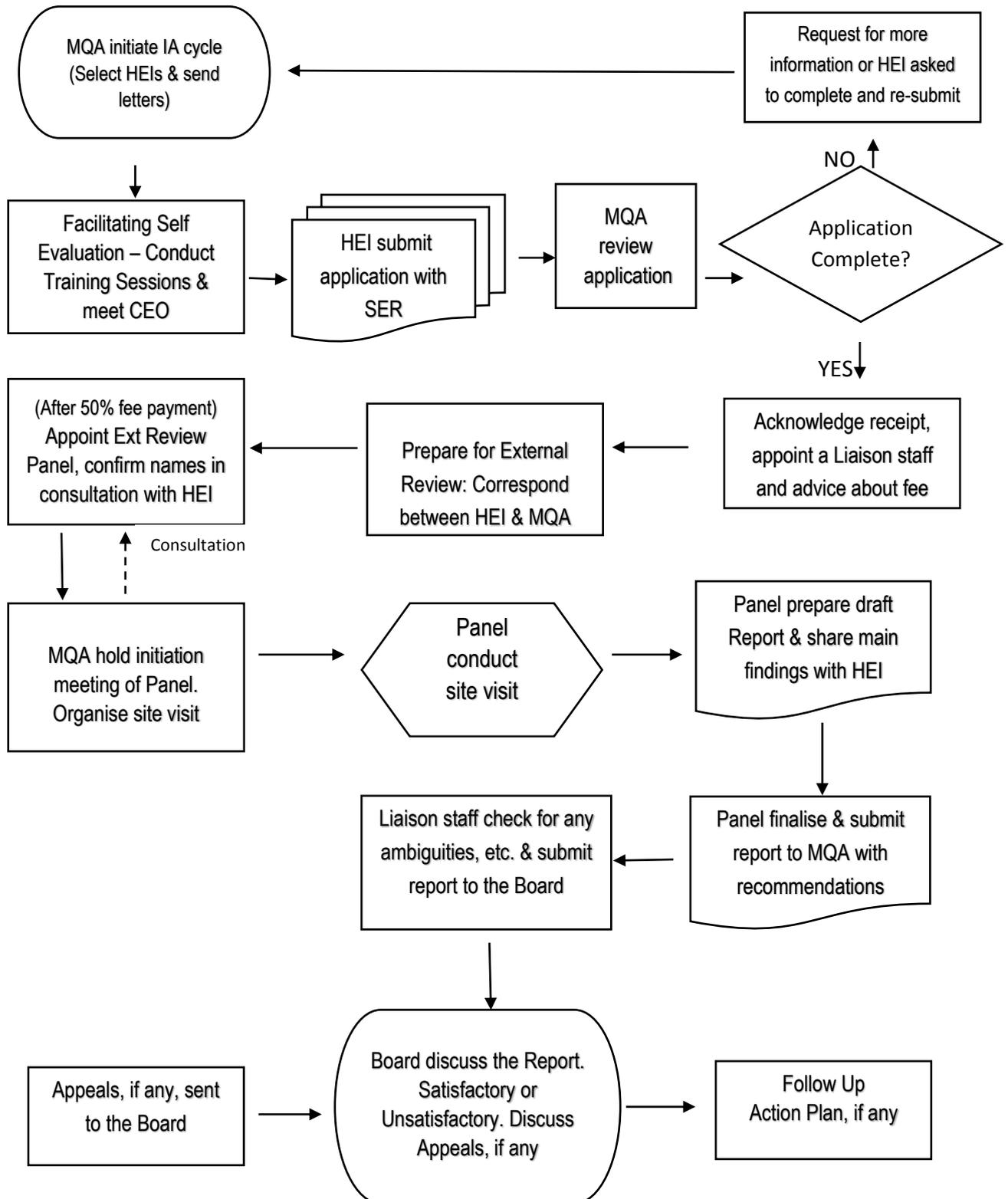
Step 4: Facilitating the Site Visit and the External Review Process

Task	Instructions	Responsibility	Timeline
Arrange Site Visit to HEI	Support Review Panel to arrange the Site Visit. MQA staff on the Review Panel should work with the HEI's Liaison Officer to schedule the meetings, focus groups (if required) and data collection during the Site Visit.	MQA staff on Review Panel	Week 22
Conduct Site Visits	MQA staff on the Review Panel should participate actively in ensuring that the Site-Visit goes well.	Chair of Review Panel, assisted by MQA staff.	Week 22&23 Drafting of Report during Week 23 to 25
Hold the Post Site-Visit Meeting	Hold Post Site-Visit Meeting soon after the Site-Visit to debrief, analyze findings, and prepare for the drafting of the Review Report.	Chair of Review Panel, assisted by MQA staff.	Week 23 to 25
Arrange External Review Report presentation to HEI	Immediately after the drafting the External Review Report, arrange a meeting to present the findings to the HEI. The Procedure for Conducting External Review contains further details of this meeting.	MQA staff on Review Panel	Week 25

Step 5: Receiving the External Review Report and Taking Follow-up Actions

Task	Instructions	Responsibility	Timeline
Receive the External Review Report	Check to ensure that the basic format is followed and essential information such as findings, allocated points, and recommendations are in the Report. If not, request minor changes required.	Focal Point	Week 26
Take a decision on quality of operations of the HEI, based on the External Review Report.	<p>Make one of the following decisions on the operations of the HEI, based on the External Review Report findings.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Unsatisfactory 2. Satisfactory <p>If deemed unsatisfactory, a period not exceeding 2 years would be provided to bring non-physical facility related changes. Changes related to physical facilities could be provided with up to 4 years, depending on the nature of the change. The HEI will be required to submit an action plan to bring suggested changes. Follow-up reviews and Site Visits should be conducted after the period provided to bring these changes, or at least annually. Those deemed satisfactory will also be suggested to follow the recommendations made in the Report.</p>	CEO with MQA Senior Management	Week 27 - 29
Send the External Review Report to the HEI	Send the External Review Report to the HEI. The covering letter should ask the HEI to develop a follow up action plan based on the findings of the Report and submit it to MQA (see above)	CEO	Week 29 - 30
Facilitate the appeal process	Inform the HEI regarding the opportunity to appeal the External Review Report's findings within 7 working days of receiving the Report.	Focal Point	Week 30-31
Submit appeals received to MQA Board for a final decision.	Once an appeal is received, MQA management should review it and produce a report to the MQA Board. This report should contain issues raised by the HEI in its appeal, and MQA management's opinion on these issues. Board's decision will be final.	CEO and Board	Week 35

2.5 Flowchart: Institutional Audit



3. Procedure for Conducting Institutional Self-Evaluation

3.1 Introduction

The purpose of this Procedure for Conducting Institutional Self-Evaluation is to assist higher education institutions (HEIs) in conducting the Institutional Self-Evaluation as outlined in the MQA's Guidelines for Institutional Audit. This Procedure provides suggested strategies for conducting the Institutional Self-Evaluation. Members of HEIs governing councils, CEOs (Vice-Chancellors, Rectors, Deans or Directors), academic board/senate/committee members and staff and students of HEIs involved in the Self-Evaluation process will find this document useful.

3.2 Overview of the Institutional Audit

Institutional Audit is an activity in which a HEI is assessed in terms of a set of established criteria as well as against the achievement of its own mission. It is a key element of MQA's effort to provide quality assurance in higher education, and to continuously enhance the quality of higher Education in the Maldives. Participation in the Institutional Audit process is an obligation for all HEIs operating in Maldives.

The Institutional Audit consists of two key components:

Self-Evaluation

This is a process undertaken internally by the HEI. This document provides guidelines to facilitate Self-Evaluation. The final product of the Self-Evaluation will be the Self-Evaluation Report (SER).

External Review

This is a process conducted by an external Review Panel. This Panel will be appointed by MQA in consultation with the respective relevant HEI.

The purposes of Institutional Audit are:

1. To recognize the strengths of HEIs operations and academic quality
2. To further strengthen operations and academic quality by making relevant recommendations for future improvement.

The following are important characteristics of the Institutional Audit process to keep in mind when conducting the Self-Evaluation.

1. Institutional Audit is a process based on the principle of continuous quality enhancement, with the motivation to further enhance the operations of the HEI.
2. Institutional Audit is conducted on a five-year cycle.
3. Institutional Audit is a collaborative process undertaken by the HEI and MQA, based on mutual respect and cooperation.
4. Institutional Audit is conducted at the systems level by considering policies, processes and procedures.
5. Institutional Audit is based on the concept of peer-review; the members of the External Review Panel will have experience in higher education and will base their review of the HEI on the Self-Evaluation conducted by the relevant HEI, and in consultation with stakeholders in the respective HEI.
6. Institutional Audit will consider the diversity of institutions, and the outcomes of the process is expected to relate to the size, structure and nature (public or private) of the respective HEI.
7. Institutional Auditing is based on values of transparency and excellence.
8. Institutional Auditing is designed to follow internationally accepted good practices in quality assurance.

3.3 Overview of the Institutional Audit Criteria

MQA's Institutional Audit Criteria consists of 6 components, each referred to as a separate criterion. A description of each criterion is provided in Appendix I. Out of a total of 100 points, each criterion is allocated a certain number of points based on relative importance. They are:

Criterion 1:	Governance & Planning	15 points
Criterion 2:	Teaching, Learning & Research	25 points
Criterion 3:	Staffing	15 points
Criterion 4:	Facilities and Resources	15 points
Criterion 5:	Admission, Records & Student Services	15 points
Criterion 6:	Quality Assurance	15 points

Under each criterion, key questions that could be asked by the HEI during the process of Self-Evaluation are suggested. These questions are meant to indicate aspects within each criterion that facilitate the review of respective criterion. See Appendix II.

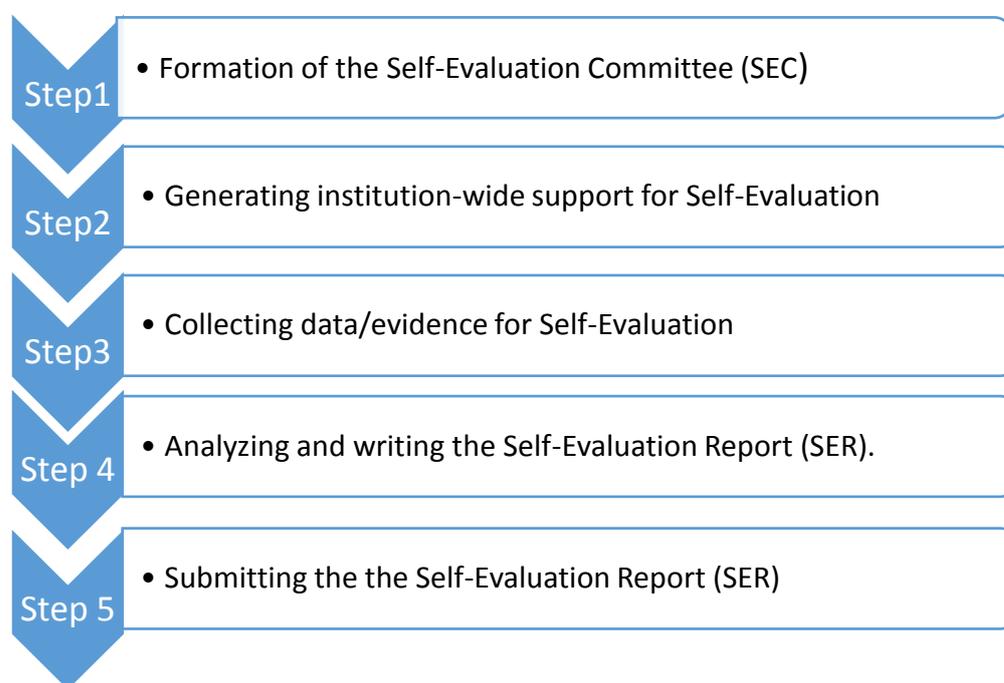
All the questions in Appendix II are not meant to be applicable to all HEIs. Only those questions that are relevant to the HEI in terms of its size, level and nature (private or public) are expected to be considered.

3.4 Steps for Conducting the Self-Evaluation

HEIs selected for Institutional Auditing will receive a letter from MQA requesting to begin the Self-Evaluation. Upon receiving this request, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the institution (e.g., Vice-Chancellor, Rector, Dean or Director) is expected to inform the governing body of the institution (e.g. University or College Council), and other relevant institutional stakeholders, about the MQA’s request to begin Self-Evaluation.

MQA expects the CEO to lead the process of Self-Evaluation; however, the HEI may also appoint a competent alternative person for the purpose.

The HEI is suggested to undertake the following 5-step process in Self-Evaluation.



Step 1: Formation of the Self-Evaluation Committee or Working Group

It is suggested that the Self-Evaluation process be led by a committee or a working group consisting of key institutional stakeholders. In this document, such a committee is hereafter referred to as the Self-Evaluation Committee (SEC). The composition of SEC could include:

- The Head of HEI (hereafter referred to as the CEO)
- Head of at least one academic faculty/school/department
- A senior administrative staff, preferably the person in the role of the Registrar
- A teaching/academic staff member
- A student

The HEI may wish to add additional members based on its needs and institutional circumstances. No restriction is placed on SEC securing the support of an external consultant in the Self-Evaluation process. If so, the HEI should inform MQA of the external consultant, including the qualifications and experience of the relevant person.

The mandate and specific tasks of the SEC should be shared widely with key stakeholders in the institution.

A member of the SEC should be designated as the Chair (possibly the CEO of the HEI), and charged with the responsibility of leading the Self-Evaluation process. The CEO is suggested as the Chair since she/he is likely best placed to address bottlenecks if any, in the process. The CEO may also be the appropriate person to facilitate the process of collecting evidence/data and ensure the efficiency of the Self-Evaluation process. The CEO will also be best placed to facilitate necessary resources and in liaising with the governing body. The Chair of the SEC is also suggested to lead the development of the SER and disseminate its findings among stakeholders.

Step 2: Generating Institution-wide Support

Before the work of the SEC begins, it is recommended that the CEO generates institution-wide awareness and support for the Institutional Audit and the Self-Evaluation process. The key messages below could be communicated within the institutional community for raising awareness and support for the Self-Evaluation.

Messages to Communicate

- Institutional Audit is a process that recognizes the operational strength and academic quality, and helps to identify opportunities for further improvement.
- The Self-Evaluation process is an integral, and the very first step, of Institutional Audit process, which will be followed by the External Review process.
- Participation of all stakeholders is essential for success. These would include academic and admin leadership; Council; Academic Senate /Board; committees; academic staff, including part-time lecturers; student leaders; and administrative staff at various departments and units of the HEI.
- What to expect and how they can contribute

Step 3: Collecting Data/Evidence

The following are the basic criteria of the Institutional Audit; these 6 criteria form the dimensions/standards to consider in the Institutional Audit.



A description of each criterion is provided in the Guidelines for Institutional Audit. Appendix I provides details of each criterion. In addition, (1) key questions to ask and (2) potential sources of data/evidence that relate to each question are included in Appendix II.

The questions on the Self-Evaluation Assessment Form (Appendix II) are meant to guide data collection. Data to collect are listed as documentary evidence and statistical indicators that can be easily obtained from the HEI. It should be noted that every question, under the respective criterion in Appendix II, may not be answered. HEIs may wish to select some of the questions, and revise others, based on the size, complexity, and nature of the HEI. The HEI may also use additional questions.

The use of various data sources, as evidence, would enhance the credibility of the SER. Such evidence would also support the institution to monitor the effectiveness of actions for future improvements. The type of data identified could be both quantitative and qualitative. Quantitative data may include institutional demographic statistics, assessment statistics, performance statistics, and financial records. Student achievement data, and data segregated by local and overseas programmes could be included.

Qualitative data may include documentary evidence of policies, procedures, operations, reports, minutes of meetings and descriptions of mechanisms and processes. Evidence of international activities could be included as well.

The HEI may attach relevant sets of data to appendices of the Self-Evaluation Report (SER). Data/evidence that are deemed inappropriate to include in the SER can be kept available for the Review Panel to verify and evaluate during the Site Visit by Panel members.

It is recommended that the SEC identifies all sources of potential data in advance, and develops a plan to collect them. Careful planning for data collection will be important to ensure that the evaluation process is completed on time.

The SEC could delegate responsibilities of collection to its members or to other appropriate staff members of the HEI.

Step 4: Analyzing the data and writing the Self-Evaluation Report (SER)

Appoint a lead writer to develop the SER

The SEC should appoint a competent person from its members to lead the data analysis and writing of the SER. If HEI hire the support of an external consultant(s) for data analysis and writing, information regarding such consultant(s) should be shared with MQA.

It is important the lead writer (should be an internal member of the HEI) be available during the Site Visit of the External Review Panel to answer questions raised regarding the content of the SER.

It should be noted that the SER is the most important document of the Institutional Audit process. It should comprise all essential information, including supporting data, which would be necessary for an outsider to understand the operations of the HEI. The External Review Panel will consider the SER as the key reference document during the review process.

The Review Panel members will interview and hold discussions with institutional stakeholders to verify the content and claims made in the SER during the Site Visit. Based on this verification, and further analysis, the Review Panel will make judgements regarding the achievements, strengths, and weaknesses of the HEI, and offer recommendations for future improvement.

Content of the SER

The SER should adequately describe all features related to the Institutional Audit Criteria (Appendix I). It is also essential that the SER is not merely descriptive, but also analytical in its findings. Equally, it is important to provide evidence for the findings to allow an outside reader to understand how the Report arrived at its conclusions. Such evidence or data could be either incorporated into the text of the SER or attached as appendices.

Furthermore, in addition to listing strengths and weaknesses, the SER should also propose solutions for further development and how shortcomings would be remedied. This could be presented in the form of specific actions to be taken, indicating a clear time frame. It is preferred that such a plan of actions be proposed in a separate chapter or section of SER.

In analysing the data, the HEI could benchmark its data to international standards or that of other comparable institutions, locally or internationally. Through data analysis, the HEI may also set performance indicators related to student achievement, teaching, and research.

Although not necessary, it may be useful to conduct a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analysis for each standard separately to evaluate the performance of the institution.

When writing the Report, it is important to keep in mind that it would not only be a document in the context of the Institutional Audit, but it would also be an internal working document and guide for the HEI.

Suggested Format of the SER

It is expected that the SER would consist of the following:

1. An introductory section that provides general information about the HEI.
2. Separate sections on:
 1. Governance & Planning
 2. Teaching, Learning & Research
 3. Staffing
 4. Admission, Records & Student Services
 5. Facilities & Financial Resources
 6. Quality Assurance
3. A section on summary of the findings and proposed actions.

It is also important to keep the SER as concise as possible, whilst containing all essential information. Important documents that outline specific issues in more detail, and/or provide documentary evidence, could be annexed to the Report and referred to in the main body of the text. The final SER submitted to MQA should have been reviewed for readability, clarity and comprehensiveness.

Step 5: Submitting the Self-Evaluation Report

The SER should be submitted before the deadline given in the letter sent to request the initiation of the Self-Evaluation process.

In most cases the SER should be submitted in English language; however, a part or whole of SER could be written in Dhivehi based on justifiable reasons.

The SER should be submitted both as a hard copy and as a soft copy, in PDF format. A responsible representative, preferably CEO, of the HEI should sign the Report.

In addition to formal submission of the SER to MQA, it is expected that the findings of the SER will be distributed widely within the HEI. Dissemination of the SER findings will help to develop the quality of culture in the HEI.

Related Documents

Appendix I: Institutional Audit Criteria

Appendix II: Self-Evaluation Assessment Form

4 Procedure for Conducting the External Review

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this Procedure for Conducting External Review is to assist Review Panel members in conducting the External Review as outlined in MQA's Guidelines for Institutional Audit. The External Review is an integral part of the Institutional Audit which consists of the following two inter-related components:

1. Self-Evaluation, conducted internally by the HEI
2. External Review, conducted by an external Review Panel.

The External Review Panel will consist of 3 to 5 members that are appointed by MQA, based on their qualifications and expertise. Panel Chair will also be appointed by MQA. The External Review will begin after the HEI has completed its Self-Evaluation.

4.2 Overview of the Institutional Audit

Institutional Audit is an activity in which a HEI is assessed in terms of a set of established criteria (see Appendix I) as well as against the achievement of its own mission. It is a key element of MQA's effort to provide quality assurance in higher education, and to continuously enhance the quality of higher education in the Maldives. Participation in the Institutional Audit process is an obligation for all HEIs' operation in Maldives.

The objectives of Institutional Audit are to strengthen the operations of the HEI by:

1. Recognizing strengths and weaknesses of operations
2. Providing feedback on performance
3. Offering recommendations for further improvement

The following are important characteristics of the Institutional Audit process:

1. It is a process based on the principle of continuous quality enhancement, with the motivation to further enhance the operations of the HEI.
2. It is conducted on a five-year cycle.
3. It is a collaborative effort undertaken by HEIs and MQA, based on mutual respect and cooperation.
4. It is conducted at the systems level by considering policies, processes and procedures.
5. It is based on the concept of peer-review; the members of the External Review Panel will include those with experience in higher education and will base their review based on consultation with stakeholders in the HEI.

6. It will take diversity of institutions into account, and the outcomes of the process are expected to relate to the size, structure and nature (public or private) of the respective HEI.
7. It is based on values of transparency and excellence.
8. It is a process that is designed to follow internationally accepted good practices in quality assurance.

4.3 Overview of the Institutional Audit Criteria

In the Institutional Audit process the HEIs are assessed under the Institutional Audit Criteria. This Criteria includes the following:

Criterion 1: Governance & Planning	15 points
Criterion 2: Teaching, Learning & Research	25 points
Criterion 3: Staffing	15 points
Criterion 4: Facilities & Resources	15 points
Criterion 5: Admission, Records & Student Services	15 points
Criterion 6: Quality Assurance	15 points

Points are allocated based on relative weightage of the criterion, amounting to a total of 100 points.

The focus of each criterion is at the systems level, looking at policies, processes and procedures. The Guidelines on Institutional Audit provides a description of each criterion in the Institutional Audit Criteria. The Appendix I provides a detailed description of each criterion. The Appendix III provides a set of questions with related data/evidence for the Review Panel members to use during the Site Visit. Appendix IV provides the format for developing the Review Panel Report.

4.4 Steps for Conducting the External Review

The External Review process is expected to follow the following steps.



The External Review process is expected to be completed in less than 7 weeks.

Step 1: Appointing of Review Panel Members

MQA will write to invite members of the External Review Panel. The Review Panel will consist of 3 to 5 members and, among the members, a Chair of the Panel will be appointed.

Those who are invited to become members of the Review Panel will be among those who have been selected earlier and have agreed to be placed on a roster of potential Review Panel members. Those on this roster would have received training on MQA's Institutional Audit and on conducting the External Review.

The letter of invitation from MQA will indicate that the HEI(s) that are to be externally reviewed by the respective Review Panel. The deadline to complete the review process will be informed.

This letter will also include the contact details of a staff of MQA who would be appointed as the MQA's representative on the Panel to provide secretariat support. The MQA representative will also actively participate in the review process.

In addition, MQA will request the invited member to contact MQA if the candidate foresees a situation of potential conflict of interest arising from the HEI(s) that has been selected for External Review.

The invitation letter will include samples of the following documents for the invited member to review and bring to the Initiation meeting of the Review Panel. These documents are:

1. Declaration of Non-Conflict of Interest
2. Non-Disclosure Statement
3. Review Panel Member Contract

Step 2: Review Panel Initiation Meeting

During this meeting MQA will appoint the Review Panel members by signing the Review Panel Member Contract. MQA will request Panel members to sign the Declaration of Non-Conflict of Interest and Non-Disclosure Statement. The Non-Disclosure Statement is a statement on which the reviewer declares that all information obtained during the process of the Institutional Audit will remain confidential and will only be used for the work of the Review Panel internally.

Once relevant documents are signed, the Chair will take charge of the meeting and proceed with the meeting. The Chair will distribute the Self-Evaluation Report (SER) to be reviewed by the Panel.

During this meeting a work schedule will be agreed by the Panel. It should include:

1. Discussing the process and timeline for initial reviewing of the Self-Evaluation Report by each member
2. Selecting dates for
 - (a) Pre Site-Visit Meeting
 - (b) Site-Visit
 - (c) Post Site-Visit Meeting
3. Discussing the process, timeline and delegating of responsibilities for drafting the Review Panel Report among Panel members
4. Selecting a date to meet the HEI to clarify pending issues before finalizing the Review Panel Report.
5. Selecting a date for the Review Report Finalization Meeting

Step 3: Review of the HEI's Self-Evaluation Report (SER)

The purpose of this step is for the Review Panel members to become familiar with the content of the SER. Members should carefully review the claims made and evidence provided in the SER.

The SER will follow the following format:

1. An introductory section that provides general information about the HEI
2. Separate sections on:
 - 1) Governance & Planning
 - 2) Teaching, Learning & Research
 - 3) Staffing
 - 4) Admission, Records & Student Services
 - 5) Facilities & Financial Resources
 - 6) Quality Assurance
3. A section on the summary of the findings and proposed actions.

Appendix III, “Review Panel Assessment Form” provides a set of questions under each criterion for Panel members to assess. The SER would have been generated using the same set of questions under each criterion.

Review Panel members may divide up the responsibility of assessing certain components of the Criteria among members of the Panel for efficiency.

Step 4: Pre-Site-Visit Meeting

Having become familiar with the respective SER, the next step is to prepare for the Site Visit. It is expected that before this meeting, Panel members would have identified documents and statistics to verify, additional evidence/data to seek, and whom to interview during the Site-Visit.

In this meeting, Panel members should come to a consensus on what further information to gather during Site-Visit and whom to meet or interview. The Panel may decide to interview students, academic staff, administrative staff, CEO of HEI and members of the governing body of the HEI. The Panel may also decide to hold focus group meetings, if deemed useful.

It is important to ensure that the duration of the Site-Visit to a single campus does not exceed more than 3 days. However, it should be noted that depending on the size and complexity of the HEI, the duration of the Site-Visit may take longer. If a HEI has multiple campuses, the duration of the Site-Visit could be extended accordingly.

By the end of the Pre Site-Visit Meeting, Panel members would have developed a well-defined schedule of meetings and interviews. The Panel would also have created a list of documents and systems to review during the Site-Visit for verification purposes.

Following this meeting, the MQA staff on the Panel will inform the HEI regarding the schedule of activities and dates of the Site-Visit so that the HEI can prepare to accommodate the Review Panel.

Each HEI would have designated a Liaison Officer who will work with the Review Panel for during the Site-Visit. This Liaison Officer is expected to make internal arrangements within the HEI for the Site-Visit and ensure that the visit goes smoothly.

Step 5: Site-Visit

The purpose of the Site-Visit is multi-fold and it includes:

1. To validate and substantiate the claims made in the SER
2. To assess the HEI and to collect data for the Review Panel Report.
3. To observe and facilitate Review Panel's process of arriving at judgments

During the Site-Visit, the Review Panel would conduct a series of interviews with different groups, scrutinise relevant documents and assess facilities. Interviews may be conducted with the leadership of the HEI, full-time and part-time academic staff, administrative staff, students, and graduates. If focus group sessions are conducted, it is advised to limit the group size to no more than 5 to 7 members.

Where necessary, the principle of confidentiality should be applied for those who are interviewed in which information provided by respective interviewees should not be identifiable on the Report.

Step 6: Post Site-Visit Meeting

The post Site-Visit meeting should be held soon after visiting the HEI. The purpose of this meeting is to compare notes and to come to a consensus on the assessment made under each criterion. At this meeting, Panel members should assess, allocate points, generate findings, and decide on recommendations.

At this meeting, members should also identify if any additional documents or information needs to be obtained from the HEI.

The second purpose of this meeting is to designate a Panel member who will lead drafting of the Review Panel Report.

It is also important to determine a timeline for completing the first draft of the Report. The time allocated to obtain feedback among Panel members should also be decided so that the Report could be completed by a target date.

Step 7: Drafting the Review Panel Report

The Review Panel Report should describe the situation, offer analytical comments, and make recommendations under each criterion. The Review Report Format in Appendix IV outlines a suggested format for the Report.

Step 8: Clarifying Pending Issues with the HEI

During the drafting of the Review Panel Report, certain issues such as need to collect additional information are likely to arise. Clarification of certain statistics and data may be required to avoid factual errors in the Report. Therefore, Review Panel is suggested to conduct a follow-up visit to the HEI to clarify any such pending issues.

If deemed appropriate, the Panel may also discuss some of the findings with the leadership of the HEI. What findings to share should be a judgment made by the Panel.

Step 9: Review Panel Report Finalization Meeting

This is the final meeting of the Review Panel. The purpose of this meeting is to carefully go through the Report, bring any last-minute changes, and prepare the final Report for submission to MQA.

Step 10: Submitting the External Review Panel Report

The External Review Report should be signed by all members of the Review Panel, and submitted to MQA on the stipulated deadline. Chair of the Review Panel should contact MQA to make arrangements to submit the Report in person to the CEO, or designated staff, of MQA.

Related Documents

Appendix I: Institutional Audit Criteria

Appendix III: Institutional Audit Assessment Form

Appendix IV: Review Panel Report Format

Appendix I: Institutional Audit Criteria

Criterion 1: Planning & Governance

Written vision and mission statements that reflect the aspirations, functions and characteristics of the higher education institution are vital to guide the strategic plan and operations of the institution. These statements may include the values and principles of the HEI, such as quality in teaching and research, but also point out the unique features and ambitions of a higher education institution. Such statements are most effective when disseminated and communicated throughout the HEI, and made known to the wider public.

The institutional strategic plan should reflect the short-term, medium-term, and long-term goals/objectives. These objectives could be translated into key performance indicators that allow for measuring the progress of the implementation of the plan.

The governance system of the HEI should be designed in a manner that it effectively supports the achievement of the institutional mission and the implementation of the strategic plan. It should ensure that academic staff, administrative staff as well as students are adequately involved in decision-making. To facilitate this, a qualified CEO (Vice-Chancellor, Rector, Director or Dean) needs to be appointed, and appropriate institutional bodies such as academic senate/board/committee and other relevant committees need to be created. A clear division and distribution of responsibilities and accountabilities between respective bodies of the institution are essential.

The institutional decision-making processes need to be transparent. This requires appropriate documentation, including minutes, of decision-making bodies. All individuals who may be impacted by institutional decisions should be appropriately informed about such decisions in a timely manner.

Criterion 2: Teaching, Learning & Research

The HEI should have an effective system in place for the design, approval, monitoring and review of its academic programmes. It should guarantee that MQA requirements are met for each academic programme. It should also ensure that academic programmes are in line with acceptable subject or discipline specific academic standards and, where applicable, meet the requirements of the labour market.

The HEI should publish adequate information about its academic programmes. This will include provisions about credits, learning outcomes, the methods of teaching, learning and assessment as well as information about admission, progression and completion. Student admission should follow a consistently applied regulation. Such regulations should ensure that the minimum admission criteria are respected, and that alternative entry criteria are not the predominant entry route, but rather it is an additional option offered for a certain percentage of applicants.

Through a published guideline on advanced standing, the HEI should ensure that no more than 1/3 of the credits of an academic programme could be considered as advanced standing. Furthermore, the HEI should ensure that advanced standing can only be granted for learning which took place at a higher or equal level to the programme for which a student is applying.

The HEI should have a system in place to ensure that the credit point system is consistently applied to all academic programmes in which one credit is awarded for 10 hours of learning time of an average student. Credit hours should embrace contact hours, as well as self-study, assignments, workshop or laboratory time, research activities or practical placements.

Furthermore, in calculating the students' workload, the HEI should be realistic and that the total number of credits for one year of fulltime study should normally amount to 120. And, the HEI should ensure that the standards and minimum requirements resulting from the MNQF are met regardless of the mode of delivery of an academic programme.

The HEI should guarantee that the learning outcomes for academic programmes adequately correspond to the level descriptors of MNQF and that the teaching, learning and assessment methods appropriately relate to the learning outcomes. Institutional policy on student assessment should guarantee that students are fairly assessed, based on consistently applied and transparent regulations. The assessment methods should be relevant for the types and levels of academic programmes, in which written examinations are part of the assessment methods. Furthermore, the HEI should ensure that regulations and procedures against plagiarism and other forms of academic malpractice are thoroughly enforced.

The HEI should ensure that students have access to adequate learning resources, including learning space, libraries, and IT infrastructure. The HEI should also ensure provision of academic counselling/advising and other support services.

If research-based graduate programmes are offered, the HEI should have adequate and qualified staff to teach research methodology and to supervise graduate students. The HEI should also have guidelines for developing and approving research proposals, providing ethical reviews of proposed research, format/guidelines for writing thesis/dissertations, and a policy and procedure for evaluating the originality and quality of thesis/dissertations.

Criterion 3: Staffing

The HEI needs to ensure that it employs sufficient number of academic and administrative staff to carry out its activities; this includes having a policy on student-staff ratio.

The HEI should ensure that staff employed are qualified for the activities they undertake. Academic staff should normally possess a qualification higher than the qualification to which the academic programme they teach. Exceptions can be made if the lecturer has significant experience and expertise. The HEI should also have policies and procedures for the recruitment and promotion of its staff that place emphasis on appropriate qualifications, competences and skills of the staff.

To further enhance the quality of its staffing, the HEI should provide for and encourage professional development opportunities for its staff based on needs assessments. Regularly performance review of staff should be in place, with a view to enhancing quality teaching and to recognise excellence in practice.

Criterion 4: Facilities & Resources

It is essential that the HEI has appropriate financial resources to undertake its activities. The HEI should therefore align its strategy and offerings of academic programmes with a financial strategy. It is vital that the HEI shows that it manages its financial resources efficiently and effectively.

The budget of the HEI should be appropriate for the attainment of its mission and the implementation of its strategy. The budgetary procedures should also allow for medium-term financial planning.

The accounting system used by the HEI should correspond to accepted professional accounting standards and be in line with national regulations. Furthermore, the HEI should ensure that it is subject to regular external financial auditing.

The HEI should ensure that it has adequate physical and technological facilities that are suitable and adequate for programmes of learning offered. In addition, supporting facilities, such as recreational facilities, cafeterias, etc. are desirable to facilitate academic success. Facilities provided should be appropriate to the size and nature of the institution.

Criterion 5: Admission, Records & Support Services

The HEI should have a clearly defined system to manage student recruitment, admission, registration, granting of advanced standing, and in maintaining up-to-date student records. The HEI should also provide support services for students that include orientation (academic and social), and academic counseling/advising.

The opportunities for students to form associations, student clubs, and to experience student leadership should be provided. Furthermore, the HEI should facilitate co-curricular and sports activities and provide opportunities for community involvement for students.

Criterion 6: Quality Assurance

It is essential that the HEI assumes responsibility for the quality of its operations and, therefore, have in place a published policy on quality assurance. In addition, HEI should have a system of quality assurance, supported by a quality assurance strategy. Such a policy and system should ensure that stakeholders, i.e. management, academic staff, administrative staff, students and external stakeholders, have an active role in carrying out quality assurance activities.

It is vital that the quality assurance system covers all aspects of its operations, including teaching and learning, admissions, record keeping, facilities, finances, community engagement, management, governance, and support services.

The quality assurance system should also have adequate processes, with clear responsibilities for the individual staff members and institutional bodies involved. The outcomes of the processes should be integrated into the operations of the HEI; such operations include teaching and learning, management, planning, decision-making and administrative functions.

To support the enhancement of quality, the quality assurance system should provide for relevant information and data that can be used for strategic management to mitigate identified weaknesses. HEI should also regularly review its quality assurance system with a view to improving it.

The continuous enhancement of the quality depends on the commitment of everybody involved. Hence, the quality assurance system should place emphasis on the development of a quality culture in which every member of staff clearly embraces the idea of quality enhancement as an integral part of their work.

Appendix II: Self-Evaluation Assessment Form

The purpose of this Appendix is to facilitate the Institutional Self-Evaluation process by providing a systematic approach to follow. Tables are provided for each criterion below. When writing the Self-Evaluation Report (SER), it is expected that the HEI will produce tables of similar format; modifications can be made based on the need. Tables included with the SER could replace the column heading of “suggested data/evidence” to “available data/evidence”, and list the data/evidence which would be made available for External Review process.

Criterion 1: Governance & Planning

Criterion 2: Teaching, Learning & Research

Criterion 3: Staffing

Criterion 4: Facilities & Resources

Criterion 5: Admission, Records & Student Services

Criterion 6: Quality Assurance

Each table consists of the following columns: (1) question; (2) suggested data/evidence, (3) “yes”, (4) “somewhat”, (6) “no” and (7) remarks.

Question:	This column includes questions regarding specific aspects of the relevant criterion
Suggested data/evidence:	This column suggests data or evidence that the institution could collect to substantiate the answer provided to the respective question in the first column. Suggested data/evidences could be both quantitative (statistical) or qualitative (e.g. policies, procedures, systems, institutional statements and plans) The HEI may include documentary evidence in a separate appendix attached to the Self-Evaluation Report.
Yes:	Select “Yes” if the aspect asked in the respective question has been addressed fully by your institution
Somewhat:	Select “Somewhat” if the aspect asked in the question has been achieved partially by your institution
No	Select “No” if the aspect asked in the question is not addressed by your institution
Remarks:	This could include strengths and weaknesses and plans for future improvements.

Criterion 1: Governance & Planning

Planning

Question	Suggested Data/evidence	Yes	Somewhat	No	Remarks
Do we have a clearly defined mission statement?	HEI's mission statements				
Is the mission supported by a strategic or action plan with a specific duration, goals/objectives, strategies or actions? Is policy development and planning guided by systematic research?	HEI's strategic or action plan				
Is our planning guided by systematic research?	Example of prior research				
Is our plan communicated to all members of the institutions (academic and administrative staff, and students) and are these stakeholders involved in achieving the plan?	Evidence of meetings/discussions (e.g. minutes of meetings) on plan implementation.				
Is our institution achieving its goals/objectives on the plan?	HEI performance review reports. Statistical indicators (e.g. number and type/focus of academic programmes, graduation data, student enrolment data) that illustrate achievement of goal.				

Criterion 1: Governance & Planning (Continued)

Governance

Question	Suggested Evidence/Data	Yes	Somewhat	No	Remarks
Do we have an appropriate and effective governance and organizational structure?	Organogram and its description.				
Is there a body that oversees the all administrative and academic matters of our institution? If so, provide details under remarks.	Mandate or terms of reference and composition of the governing body.				
Is the governance and management structure suitable for our institution in terms of size and nature (public or private)?	Organogram. Mandate of governing body. Benchmarking in relation to similar institutions of good international reputation.				
Do we have a set of principles, codes, or values that govern our institution? Provide details under remarks.	Documentary evidence of the principles and values that govern the institution. Policy documents of the governing body.				
Is our governing body active? If so, indicate how often it meets per year and examples of some issues attended by the governing body under remarks.	Schedule of meetings (past three years). Non-confidential minutes (sample).				

Criterion 1: Governance & Planning (Continued)

Governance

Question	Suggested Evidence/Data	Yes	Somewhat	No	Remarks
Do we have a qualified and competent Vice-Chancellor, Rector, Dean, or a Director who is the chief executive officer of our institution? Summarize key responsibilities of the CEO under remarks.	Organogram/organizational structure. Job description of the chief executive officer (CEO). Minimum qualifications required of the CEO.				
Is the relationship of CEO to the governing body, and other boards and committees of the institution defined well? Provide details under remarks.	Policy and criteria of appraising the performance of the CEO. Documentary evidence of how CEO relates to, and works with other relevant bodies of the institution, such as Academic Board/Committee.				

Criterion 1: Governance & Planning

(please use additional sheets if required)

Descriptions and analysis (including strengths and weaknesses)	Future Plans

Criterion 2: Teaching, Learning & Research

Academic Programme Development and Review

Question	Suggested Evidence/Data	Yes	Somewhat	No	Remarks
Do we have a specific body that advises the governing body in setting academic policies, and vested with the authority to undertake oversight responsibilities for academic matters of our institution? Summarize mandate under remarks.	Mandate or terms of reference of the body responsible for academic oversight responsibility, e.g., Academic Senate, Academic Board, or Academic Committee. Composition of the relevant body. Non-confidential sample minutes of meetings of the relevant body				
Are there defined responsibilities undertaken by the academic senate/board/committee undertake to ensure the (1) integrity of our academic programmes, credits and qualifications awarded; (2) to set standards of student achievement; and (3) to ensure systematic and effective academic planning? Summarize details under remarks.	Mandate or terms of reference of Academic Senate, Academic Board, or Academic Committee and Non-confidential sample minutes of meetings of the taken.				
Do we have a system in place for (1) designing new academic programmes, and (2) institutionally approving academic programmes before submitting for MQA approval?	Documentary evidence of policies and procedures within the institution in new academic programme development, including institutional process obtaining approval before submitting for MQA approval.				

Criterion 2: Teaching, Learning & Research (Continued)

Academic Programme Development and Review

Question	<i>Suggested Evidence/Data</i>	Yes	Somewhat	No	Remarks
Do we review our academic programmes on a regular cycle by considering evidence of student success and program effectiveness? Mention who undertakes this responsibility and how is such reviews conducted under remarks.	Documentary evidence of policy and procedures for reviewing academic programmes on a regular basis. Reports of academic programme review over the past 3 years.				

Criterion 2: Teaching, Learning & Research (Continued)

Teaching, Learning & Research

Question	Suggested Evidence/Data	Yes	Somewhat	No	Remarks
Do we publish sufficient details of learning goals/objective/outcomes (knowledge, skills, competencies) for each academic programme, for the benefit prospective students?	Information on website, catalogues, prospects, and pamphlets. Policy on publishing of academic programme information.				
At the beginning of programmes and modules, do we inform students about programme/module objectives/learning outcomes, schedule of topics, methods of teaching, the types of assessments, weightage of assessments, timelines for assessments and issuing of results?	Samples of programme/module outlines that are distributed to students at the beginning of programmes or module (all levels).				

<p>Do we ensure that we have qualified staff for academic programmes, including those who can teach research methodology and undertake graduate supervision, if graduate level programmes are offered?</p>	<p>Policies on qualifications of academic staff. List of current academic staff with qualifications and the programs and modules they teach. Policy or guideline on supervision of graduate students.</p>				
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Criterion 2: Teaching, Learning & Research (Continued)

Teaching, Learning & Research

Question	Suggested Evidence/Data	Yes	Somewhat	No	Remarks
Do we regularly monitor teaching of modules to ensure that all teaching and assessing of learning outcomes adhere to that standards for which approval was granted by MQA?	System and process in place to monitor teaching and for academic staff appraisal. Sample of non-confidential reports of staff appraisal.				
Do we provide a mix of both formative and summative assessments, including examinations? Under remarks, summarize the mechanisms/arrangements in place for setting, moderating, marking, grading, monitoring and evaluating the assessment methods (examinations and assigned work) for academic programmes and awards	Module outlines. Sample of assignment outlines. Sample examinations. Descriptions of assessment methods used. Policies, procedures and guidelines in place regarding setting, moderating, marking, and grading student assessments.				

Criterion 2: Teaching, Learning & Research (Continued)

Teaching, Learning and Research

Question	Suggested Evidence/Data	Yes	Somewhat	No	Remarks
Do we provide constructive and timely feedback for students as an opportunity to improve by reflecting on their own learning?	Policy and procedures on providing feedback to students on academic progress, and for performance on assignments, projects and examinations.				
Do we ensure that students are well informed of the codes of conduct for submission of assignments, project work, and for sitting examinations?	Policies, procedures and guidelines provided to students regarding academic conduct, including plagiarism, and the consequences of academic misconduct.				
Do we have disciplinary procedures in relation malpractices such as copying, plagiarism and violation of codes of conduct?	Include related policies				
Do we have a system to ensure that all module and programme outcomes (including credit and contact hours) are fulfilled by students, before awarding respective qualifications?	Policies, procedures, guidelines or directives on (1) accounting for credit hours completed by students, (2) accounting for module and programme outcomes, and (3) vetting of fulfilling programme requirements of individual students before granting awards.				

Criterion 2: Teaching, Learning & Research

(please use additional sheets if required)

Descriptions and analysis (including strengths and weaknesses)	Future plans

Criterion 3: Staffing

Staffing

Question	Suggested Evidence/Data	Yes	Somewhat	No	Remarks
Do we have a policy on student-academic staff ratio? If so, include the ratio and justification for the policy under remarks.	Policy on student to academic staff. Current student to staff ratio.				
Do we have an institutional policy on recruiting qualified academic staff?	Staff recruitment policy, including qualifications required for teaching various levels of courses?				
Are all staff members provided with employment contracts in adherence to existing national laws and regulations?	Relevant statistics: number of full-time and part-time staff with contracts. Those without contract, if it is the case. Sample contract.				

Criterion 3: Staffing (Continued)

Staffing

Question	Suggested Evidence/Data	Yes	Somewhat	No	Remarks
Do we have institutional policies on staff appraisal, promotion, leave, rewards and recognition, grievances, teaching workload, teaching conduct, and dress codes? If so, summarize them under remarks.	Policies on staff appraisal, promotion, leave, recognition, grievances, teaching load, teaching conduct, dress code, and so on. Samples of staff appraisal forms. Current teaching load of staff members, by levels or programmes of study				
Do we have a system to assess training needs, and provide sufficient opportunities for professional development of academic and professional staff members?	Training need assessment reports Examples of professional development activities provided in the recent years, including numbers and summary content of training.				

Criterion 3: Staffing

(Please use additional sheets if required)

Descriptions and analysis (including strengths and weaknesses)	Future plans

Criterion 4: Facilities & Resources

Physical Facilities

Question	Suggested Evidence/Data	Yes	Somewhat	No	Remarks
Do we provide adequate physical facilities and resources at all locations where we conduct teaching?	Size, numbers, and capacity of facilities. Description of facilities and usage				
Are our facilities safe and secure, and provide a conducive learning and working environment?	Description of safety measures. Aspects such as air-conditioning and availability of facilities such as Wifi and space that facilitate learning.				
Do we plan and evaluate the utilization and effectiveness of our facilities and equipment regularly?	Facilities planning or evaluation documents, if available				

Criterion 4: Facilities & Resources (continued)

Technological Facilities

Question	Suggested Evidence/Data	Yes	Somewhat	No	Remarks
Do we have adequate technological facilities (hardware, software and technical staff) to facilitate learning?	Type, number and capacity of facilities. Description of teaching software and online or technological learning platforms.				
Do we have adequate technological facilities for operational activities (e.g. staff and student record keeping)?	Description of hardware and software that supports institutional operations				
Do we plan and update technology to ensure that our technological infrastructure remains adequate to support our mission, operations, academic programmes, and student services?	Documentary evidence of future plans. Documentary evidence of past evaluations or reviews of facilities.				
Do we provide relevant instructional support and training for our academic and administrative staff and students in using technology driven systems and learning platforms related to our academic programmes, student services, and institutional operations?	Documentary evidence of future training activities or development of instructional materials. Documentary evidence of past training and instructional products developed (past three years)				

Criterion 4: Facilities & Resources (continued)

Financial Resources

Question	Suggested Evidence/Data	Yes	Somewhat	No	Remarks
Do we have sufficient financial resources to support and sustain its academic programs and services?	Documentary evidence (e.g. financial statements) that shows that the institution has sufficient cash flow and reserves to maintain stability, and for contingency purposes in case unforeseen occurrences.				
Do we ensure that our financial resources are distributed adequately to support the academic activities, student services, physical facilities, maintenance, and planned development activities?	Documentary evidence (e.g. financial statements) that shows distribution of financial resources. HEI may also analytically justify the distribution.				
Do we undertake regular internal and external financial auditing?	Accounting standards used. Frequency of internal auditing and external financial auditing. Most recent audited financial statement.				
Does our institution prepare financial statements in accordance with accounting national standards?	State the standards followed.				

Criterion 4: Facilities & Resources (continued)

Financial Resources

Question	Suggested Evidence/Data	Yes	Somewhat	No	Remarks
Do we engage in realistic multi-year financial planning? Under remarks, state why the financial planning is realistic, based on identified sources of revenue?	Documentary evidence of multi-year financial planning. Most recent budget. Pro forma financial projections or projected financial statements.				
Do we ensure the integrity of our finances through appropriate internal control mechanisms, risk assessment, and timely financial reporting to the governing body?	Governing bodies directives or guidelines regarding financial control and risk management. Description of institutional practices in financial control and risk management.				
Do we have sufficient and qualified staff available to handle its finances?	Qualifications and role of the designated person responsible for financial management and controls.				

Criterion 4: Facilities & Resources

(please use additional sheets if required)

Descriptions and analysis (including strengths and weaknesses)	Future plans

Criterion 5: Admission, Student Records & Student Services

Admission

Question	Suggested Evidence/Data	Yes	Somewhat	No	Remarks
Do we have a well-defined student recruitment and admission policy, with relevant procedures, that meet MQA's entry requirements?	Recruitment and admission policy and procedures.				
Are our recruitment and admission policies and procedures clearly communicated to all prospective students?	Description of how recruitment and admission policies and procedures are made public, i.e., website and in printed forms.				
Through our recruitment and admission policies, do we provide accurate and comprehensive information about fees, other financial obligations, and refund possibilities?	Recruitment and admission policy and procedures.				

Criterion 5: Admission, Student Records & Student Services (continued)

Admission

Question	Suggested Evidence/Data	Yes	Somewhat	No	Remarks
Do we have a published policy on providing advanced standing or transfer of credit?	Policy on advanced standing and transfer of credits.				
Do we have a secure and consistent mechanism to handle student application, making offers of admissions, and for payment of fees?	Documentary evidence of the relevant mechanism, or description of the process or mechanism.				
Do we ensure that our new students are provided with orientation or induction programmes regarding the rules and regulations, facilities, teaching and assessment practices, and facilities available for them?	Agenda of past induction events or programmes. Documentary evidence of planned induction events or activities.				
Does our admission process identify students who may need additional support?	Documentary evidence of procedure in place for identification of students who need additional support during the admission process, and how such support is provided.				

Criterion 5: Admission, Student Records & Student Services (continued)

Student Records

Question	Suggested Evidence/Data	Yes	Somewhat	No	Remarks
Do we have a system to maintain student records permanently, securely, and confidentially, that includes secure backup (regardless of printed or digital form records)?	Description and documentary evidence of student record keeping system and its features.				
Do we have designated person or unit charged with the responsibility for ensuring timely collection of student records, maintaining of records, and ensuring the credibility of the records?	Job description of the person responsible for collecting and keeping secure academic records of students.				
Do we have policies and procedures in place for releasing of student records and transcripts?	Published policy and procedures on releasing student records, including transcripts.				
Do we analyze and make available enrolment and graduation statistics, segregated by year, academic programs, level of qualifications, gender, and academic achievements?	Relevant and current statistical data on enrolment and graduation.				

Criterion 5: Admission, Student Records & Student Services (continued)

Student services

Question	Suggested Evidence/Data	Yes	Somewhat	No	Remarks
Do we provide a set of co-curricular activities that are suitable for the socio-educational experience of our students? What are they?	Agenda, minutes, or description of co-curricular activities.				
Do we provide appropriate academic advising to support student development and academic success? How is it organized?	Job description of designated person for academic advising or counselling. Documentary evidence of academic advising, i.e., information on website or catalogue or prospectus.				
Do we provide financial support (under special circumstances), awards and scholarships?	Policies and procedures on providing financial support, if applicable. Awards and scholarships available for students, including criteria. Statistical details of awards and scholarships and financial support offered.				

Criterion 5: Admission, Student Records & Student Services (continued)

Student services

Question	Suggested Evidence/Data	Yes	Somewhat	No	Remarks
Do we provide opportunities for student leadership and contributing to institutional decision making and governance?	Composition of institutional boards and committees with student representation. Documentary evidence of how student association functions.				
Do we allocate adequate staff, with training, for student services functions?	List and roles of staff involved in student services related roles.				

Criterion 5: Admission, Records & Student Services

(please use additional sheets if required)

Descriptions and analysis (including strengths and weaknesses)	Future plans

Criterion 6: Quality Assurance

Quality Assurance

Question	Suggested Evidence/Data	Yes	Somewhat	No	Remarks
Do we have an institutional policy on internal quality assurance?	Related policy documents on quality assurance.				
Do we have a system/strategy/mechanism in place for internal quality assurance?	Decisions of the governing body, academic senate/board, and related minutes of meetings. Description of the processes (e.g., information gathering, data collection, surveys, evaluations, consultative meetings) that are undertaken for quality assurance.				
Do we have key bodies (councils/boards/committees) and institutional leaders involved the internal quality assurance system? Summarize how these bodies relate to quality assurance, under remarks.	Mandates or terms of references of relevant bodies that are involved in quality assurance. Description of the respective role played by various institutional bodies and members of senior management.				

Criterion 6: Quality Assurance (continued)

Quality Assurance

Question	Suggested Evidence/Data	Yes	Somewhat	No	Remarks
Do we have a well-defined scope for our quality assurance? Under remarks, summarize the specific functions of the institutions that are covered under quality assurance?	Description of the functions (e.g. admission, student induction, teaching, assessment, learning outcomes, technological usage, and so on) covered under internal quality assurance.				
Is our internal quality assurance process inclusive?	Description of the respective roles of key academic staff, administrative and students involved in quality assurance				
Do we utilize the outcomes/findings of our quality assurance processes? How?	Description of how quality assurance findings are used.				

Criterion 6: Quality Assurance

(please use additional sheets if required)

Descriptions and analysis (including strengths and weaknesses)	Future plans

Appendix III: External Review Panel’s Assessment Form

The purpose this Appendix is to facilitate the work of the External Review Panel. Tables are provided for each criterion below. Appendix IV also provides a similar set of tables (excluding the column on data/evidence and with additional space provided for Observations (Strengths & Weaknesses), Commendations and Recommendations) to facilitate the development of the External Review Panel Report.

Tables are provided for each criterion:

Criterion 1:	Governance & Planning	Criterion 4:	Facilities & Resources
Criterion 2:	Teaching, Learning & Research	Criterion 5:	Admission, Records & Student Services
Criterion 3:	Staffing	Criterion 6:	Quality Assurance

Each table consists of the following columns: (1) Question; (2) Suggested Data/Evidence; (3) “Needs Improvement”; (4) “Adequate”; (5) “Good”; (6) “Excellent” and (7) Observations (Strengths and Weaknesses), Commendations and Recommendations.

Question:	This column includes questions that asks about specific aspects that relate to the respective criterion
Suggested Data/Evidence:	This column suggests data or evidence that the Review Panel should look for in relation to the specific aspect asked in the question. Suggested data/evidences could be both quantitative (statistical) or qualitative (e.g. policies, procedures, systems, institutional statements and plans). The institution should make such data available to the Panel.
Needs Improvement:	Select “Needs Improvement” to denote minimal or non-compliance of the issue/aspect addressed in the respective question. For example, if the question asks “does the institution have a mission statement?”, “Needs Improvement” should be selected if a mission statement is not available or if the existing statement is unsatisfactory.
Adequate:	Select “Adequate” to denote basic or mere satisfactory compliance of the issue/aspect addressed in the respective question.
Good:	Select “Good” to denote that the institution has clearly complied with issue/aspect addressed in the respective question and has also provided ample evidence to substantiate its compliance with the issue addressed in the question. “Good” can also denote that the institution has met the expectation of the Review Panel with respect to the relevant question.
Excellent:	Select “Excellent” to denote that the institution has fully complied with the issue/aspect addressed in the respective question, provided ample documentary evidence related to the respective question, and exceeds the expectation of the Review Panel with respect to the relevant issue/aspect addressed in the question.

Criterion 1: Governance & Planning

Planning

Question	Suggested Data/evidence	Needs Improvement	Adequate	Good	Excellent	Observations (Strengths & Weaknesses), Commendations and Recommendations
Does the institution have a clearly defined mission statement?	HEI's mission statements					
Is the mission supported by a strategic or action plan with specific duration, goals/objectives, strategies or actions?	HEI's strategic or action plan					
Is the plan communicated to all members of the institutions (lecturers, administrative staff, and students) and are stakeholders involved in achieving the plan?	Interview data with key stakeholders. Evidence of meetings/discussions (e.g. minutes of meetings) on plan implementation.					

Criterion 1: Governance & Planning (continued)

Planning

Question	Suggested Data/evidence	Needs Improvement	Adequate	Good	Excellent	Observations (Strengths & Weaknesses), Commendations and Recommendations
Is the institution achieving its goals/objectives on the plan?	Evaluation reports of the plan. Statistical indicators (e.g. number and type/focus of academic programmes, student graduation data, student enrolment data) that illustrate achievement of goal. Interview data with key stakeholders.					

Criterion 1: Governance & Planning (Continued)

Governance

Question	Suggested Evidence/Data	Needs Improvement	Adequate	Good	Excellent	Observations (Strengths & Weaknesses), Commendations and Recommendations
Does the institution have an effective and appropriate governance and organizational structure?	Organogram and its description. Interview data.					
Is there a body, with a clearly defined mandate, to oversee the governance of the institution?	Mandate or terms of reference and composition of the governing body. Minutes of governance body's meeting? Interview data.					
Is the governance (including composition of the governing body) and management structure suitable for the institution in terms of size and nature (public or private)?	Benchmarking in relation to similar institutions of good local/international reputation. Interview data					
Does the institution have a set of principles, codes, or values that govern the institution?	Documentary evidence of the principles and values that govern the institution. Policy documents of the governing body. Interview data.					
Is the governing body active?	Schedule of meetings (past three years). Non-confidential minutes (sample). Interview data: How often does the governing body meet and what evidence is available to show the activeness of the body?					

Criterion 1: Governance & Planning (Continued)

Governance

Question	Suggested Evidence/Data	Needs Improvement	Adequate	Good	Excellent	Observations (Strengths & Weaknesses), Commendations and Recommendations
Does the institution have a qualified Vice-Chancellor, Rector, Dean, or a Director, who plays the role of the Chief Executive Officer, who is responsible for the academic and financial matters of the institution?	Organogram/organizational structure. Job description of the chief executive officer (CEO). Minimum qualifications required of the CEO. Interview data.					
Is the relationship of the CEO to the governing body, and other boards and committees of the institution defined well?	Policy of the governing body in hiring and appraising the performance of the CEO. Criteria of appraising the performance of the CEO. Documentary evidence of how CEO relate to, and work with, other relevant bodies of the institution, such as Academic Board/Committee.					

Criterion 1: Governance & Planning

Overall Key Observations (Strengths & Weaknesses), Commendations and Recommendations (please use additional sheets if required)

Key Observations (Strengths & Weaknesses), Commendations	Recommendations

Criterion 2: Teaching, Learning & Research

Academic Programme Development and Review

Question	Suggested Evidence/Data	Needs Improvement	Adequate	Good	Excellent	Observations (Strengths & Weaknesses), Commendations and Recommendations
Does the institution have an appropriate body that advises the governing body in setting academic policies, and undertakes oversight responsibilities for academic matters of the institution?	Mandate or terms of reference of the body responsible for academic oversight responsibility, e.g., Academic Senate, Academic Board, or Academic Committee. Composition of the relevant body. Non-confidential minutes of meetings of the relevant body. Interview data.					
Does the academic senate/board/committee (1) ensure the integrity of academic programmes, credits and qualifications awarded; (2) set standards of student achievement; and (3) ensure systematic and effective academic planning?	Mandate or terms of reference of Academic Senate, Academic Board, or Academic Committee and Non-confidential sample minutes of meetings. Interview data.					
Does the institution have a system in place for (1) designing new academic programmes, and (2) institutionally approving academic programmes before submitting for MQA approval?	Documentary evidence of policies and procedures within the institution in new academic programme development, including institutional process obtaining approval before submitting for MQA approval. Interview data.					

Criterion 2: Teaching, Learning & Research (Continued)

Teaching, Learning & Research

Question	<i>Suggested Evidence/Data</i>	Needs Improvement	Adequate	Good	Excellent	Observations (Strengths & Weaknesses), Commendations and Recommendations
Does the institution review its academic programmes on a regular cycle by considering evidence of student success and program effectiveness?	Documentary evidence of policy and procedures for reviewing academic programmes on a regular basis. Reports of academic programme review over the past 3 years. Interview data: who undertakes this responsibility and how?					

Criterion 2: Teaching, Learning & Research (Continued)

Teaching, Learning & Research

Question	Suggested Evidence/Data	Needs Improvement	Adequate	Good	Excellent	Observations (Strengths & Weaknesses), Commendations and Recommendations
Does the institution publish sufficient details of learning goals/objective/outcomes (knowledge, skills, competencies) for each academic programme, for the benefit of prospective students?	Information on website, catalogues, prospects, and pamphlets. Policy on publishing of academic programme information. Interview data.					
At the beginning of programmes and modules, does the institution inform students about programme/module objectives/learning outcomes, schedule of topics, methods of teaching, the types of assessments, weightage of assessments, timelines for assessments and issuing of results?	Samples of programme/module outlines that are distributed to students at the beginning of programmes or module (all levels). Interview data.					
Does the institution engage qualified staff for teaching and research, including those who can teach research methodology and undertake graduate supervision, if graduate level programmes are offered?	Policies on qualifications of academic staff. List of current academic staff with qualifications and the programs and modules they teach. Policy or guidelines on supervision of graduate students. Interview data.					

Criterion 2: Teaching, Learning & Research (Continued)

Teaching, Learning & Research

Question	Suggested Evidence/Data	Needs Improvement	Adequate	Good	Excellent	Observations (Strengths & Weaknesses), Commendations and Recommendations
Does the institution regularly monitor teaching of modules to ensure that all teaching and assessing of learning outcomes adhere to the standards for which approval was granted by MQA?	System and process in place to monitor teaching and for academic staff appraisal. Non-confidential reports of staff appraisal. Interview data.					
Does the institution provide a mix of both formative and summative assessments, including examinations, and does the institution have mechanisms/arrangements for setting, moderating, marking, and grading various forms of assessments?	Module outlines. Sample of assignment outlines. Sample examinations. Descriptions of assessment methods used. Policies, procedures and guidelines in place regarding setting, moderating, marking, and grading student assessments. Interview data.					

Criterion 2: Teaching, Learning & Research (Continued)

Teaching, Learning and Research

Question	Suggested Evidence/Data	Needs Improvement	Adequate	Good	Excellent	Observations (Strengths & Weaknesses), Commendations and Recommendations
Does the institution provide constructive and timely feedback for students as an opportunity to improve by reflecting on their own learning?	Policy and procedures on providing feedback to students on academic progress, and for performance on assignments, projects and examinations. Interview data.					
Does the institution ensure that students are well informed of the codes of conduct for submission of assignments, project work, and for sitting examinations?	Policies, procedures and guidelines provided to students regarding academic conduct, including plagiarism, and the consequences of academic misconduct. Interview data					
Does the institution have disciplinary procedures in relation to malpractices such as copying, plagiarism and violation of codes of conduct?	Policies and procedures related to copying, plagiarism, and violations of various codes of conduct.					
Does the institution have a system to ensure that all module and programme outcomes (including credit and contact hours) are obtained by students, before awarding respective qualifications?	Policies, procedures, guidelines or directives on (1) accounting for credit hours completed by students, (2) accounting for module and programme outcomes, and (3) vetting of fulfilling programme requirements of individual students before granting awards.					

Criterion 2: Teaching, Learning & Research

..... out of 25

Overall Key Observations (Strengths & Weaknesses), Commendations and Recommendations

(please use additional sheets if required)

Key Observations (Strengths & Weaknesses), Commendations	Recommendations

Criterion 3: Staffing

Staffing

Question	Suggested Evidence/Data	Needs Improvement	Adequate	Good	Excellent	Observations (Strengths & Weaknesses), Commendations and Recommendations
Does the institution have an appropriate policy on student-academic staff ratio?	Policy on student to academic staff. Current student to staff ratio. Interview data on the justification for the policy.					
Does the institution have an appropriate policy on recruiting qualified academic staff?	Staff recruitment policy, including qualifications required for teaching various levels of courses. Interview data on policy, procedures, and justification for the policy.					
Are all staff members provided with employment contracts in adherence to existing national laws and regulations?	Relevant statistics: number of full-time and part-time staff with contracts. Those without contract, if it is the case. Sample contract.					

Criterion 3: Staffing (Continued)

Staffing

Question	Suggested Evidence/Data	Needs Improvement	Adequate	Good	Excellent	Observations (Strengths & Weaknesses), Commendations and Recommendations
Are there appropriate institutional policies on staff appraisal, promotion, leave, rewards and recognition, grievances, teaching workload, teaching conduct, and dress code?	Policies on staff appraisal, promotion, leave, recognition, grievances, teaching load, teaching conduct, dress code, and so on. Samples of staff appraisal forms. Current teaching load of staff members, by levels or programmes of study. Interview data on the policy.					
Is there a system to assess training needs, and provide sufficient opportunities for professional development of academic and professional staff members?	Training needs assessment reports (if available) Examples of professional development activities provided in the recent years, including numbers and summary content of training. Interview data.					

Criterion 3: Staffing

----- out of 15

Overall Key Observations (Strengths & Weaknesses), Commendations and Recommendations

(please use additional sheets if required)

Key Observations (Strengths & Weaknesses), Commendations	Recommendations

Criterion 4: Facilities & Resources

Physical Facilities

Question	Suggested Evidence/Data	Needs Improvement	Adequate	Good	Excellent	Observations (Strengths & Weaknesses), Commendations and Recommendations
Are there adequate physical facilities and resources at all locations where teaching is conducted?	Size, numbers, and capacity of facilities. Description of facilities and usage. Interview data on justification of the facilities.					
Are the facilities safe and secure, and do they provide a conducive learning and working environment?	Description of safety measures. Aspects such as air-conditioning and availability of facilities such as Wifi and space that facilitate learning.					
Does the institution plan and evaluate the utilization and effectiveness of its facilities and equipment regularly?	Facilities planning or evaluation documents, if available. Interview data.					

Criterion 4: Facilities & Resources (continued)

Technological Facilities

Question	Suggested Evidence/Data	Needs Improvement	Adequate	Good	Excellent	Observations (Strengths & Weaknesses), Commendations and Recommendations
Are there adequate technological facilities (hardware, software and technical staff) to facilitate learning?	Type, number and capacity of facilities. Description of teaching software and online or technological learning platforms.					
Are there adequate technological facilities for operational activities (e.g. staff and student record keeping)?	Description of hardware and software that supports institutional operations.					
Does the institution plan and update technology to ensure that technological infrastructure remains adequate to support its mission, operations, academic programmes, and student services?	Documentary evidence of future plans. Documentary evidence of past evaluations or reviews of facilities. Interview data.					
Does the institution provide relevant instructional support and training for academic and administrative staff and students in using technologically driven systems and learning platforms related to academic programmes, student services, and institutional operations?	Documentary evidence of future training activities or development of instructional materials. Documentary evidence of past training and instructional products developed (past three years). Interview data.					

Criterion 4: Facilities & Resources (continued)

Financial Resources

Question	Suggested Evidence/Data	Needs Improvement	Adequate	Good	Excellent	Observations (Strengths & Weaknesses), Commendations and Recommendations
Are there sufficient financial resources to support and sustain its academic programs and services?	Documentary evidence (e.g. financial statements) that shows that the institution has sufficient cash flow and reserves to maintain stability, and for contingency purposes in case unforeseen occurrences. Interview data.					
Does the institution ensure that financial resources are distributed adequately to support the academic activities, student services, physical facilities, maintenance, and planned development activities?	Documentary evidence (e.g. financial statements) that shows distribution of financial resources. HEI may also analytically justify the distribution. Interview data.					
Does the institution undertake regular internal and external financial auditing, and prepare financial statements in accordance with accounting national standards?	Accounting standards used. Frequency of internal auditing and external financial auditing. Most recent audited financial statement. Interview data.					

Criterion 4: Facilities & Resources (continued)

Financial Resources

Question	Suggested Evidence/Data	Needs Improvement	Adequate	Good	Excellent	Observations (Strengths & Weaknesses), Commendations and Recommendations
Does the institution engage in multi-year financial planning, and is the financial planning realistic, based on identified sources of revenue?	Documentary evidence of multi-year financial planning. Most recent budget. Pro forma financial projections or projected financial statements.					
Does the institution ensure the integrity of finances through appropriate internal control mechanisms, risk assessment, and timely financial reporting to the governing body?	Governing bodies directives or guidelines regarding financial control and risk management. Description of institutional practices in financial control and risk management.					
Does the institution have sufficient and qualified staff available to handle its finances?	Qualifications and role of the designated person responsible for financial management and controls.					

Criterion 4: Facilities & Resources

----- out of 15

Overall Key Observations (Strengths & Weaknesses), Commendations and Recommendations

(please use additional sheets if required)

Key Observations (Strengths & Weaknesses), Commendations	Recommendations

Criterion 5: Admission, Records & Student Services

Admission

Question	Suggested Evidence/Data	Needs Improvement	Adequate	Good	Excellent	Observations (Strengths & Weaknesses), Commendations and Recommendations
Does the institution have a well-defined student recruitment and admission policy, with relevant procedures, that meet MQA's entry requirements?	Recruitment and admission policy and procedures.					
Does the institution clearly communicate the recruitment and admission policy, and procedures to all prospective students?	Description of how recruitment and admission policies and procedures are made public, i.e., website and in printed forms. Interview data.					
Through recruitment and admission policies, does the institution provide accurate and comprehensive information about fees, other financial obligations, and refund possibilities?	Recruitment and admission policy and procedures.					

Criterion 5: Admission, Records & Student Services (continued)

Admission

Question	Suggested Evidence/Data	Needs Improvement	Adequate	Good	Excellent	Observations (Strengths & Weaknesses), Commendations and Recommendations
Does the institution have a published policy on granting advanced standing or transfer of credit?	Policy on providing advanced standing and transfer of credits.					
Is there a secure and consistent mechanism to handle student application, making offers of admissions, and for payment of fees?	Documentary evidence of the relevant mechanism, or description of the process or mechanism. Interview data.					
Does the institution ensure that new students are provided with orientation or induction programmes regarding the rules and regulations, facilities, teaching and assessment practices, and facilities available for them?	Agenda of past induction events or programmes. Documentary evidence of planned induction events or activities. Interview data.					
Does the admission process identify students who may need additional support	Documentary evidence of procedure in place for identification of who need additional support, and how such support is provided. Interview data.					

Criterion 5: Admission, Records & Student Services (continued)

Student Records

Question	Suggested Evidence/Data	Needs Improvement	Adequate	Good	Excellent	Observations (Strengths & Weaknesses), Commendations and Recommendations
Is there a system to maintain student records permanently, securely, and confidentially, that includes secure backup (regardless of printed or digital form records)?	Description and documentary evidence of student record keeping system and its features. Interview data.					
Is there a designated person or unit charged with the responsibility for ensuring timely collection of student records, maintaining of records, and ensuring the credibility of the records?	Job description of the person responsible for collecting and keeping secure academic records of students.					
Are there appropriate policies and procedures in place for releasing of student records and transcripts?	Published policy and procedures on releasing student records, including transcripts.					
Does the institution analyze and make available enrolment and graduation statistics, segregated by year, academic programs, level of qualifications, gender, and academic achievements?	Relevant and current statistical data on enrolment and graduation. Interview data.					

Criterion 5: Admission, Student Records & Student Services (continued)

Student services

Question	Suggested Evidence/Data	Needs Improvement	Adequate	Good	Excellent	Observations (Strengths & Weaknesses), Commendations and Recommendations
Does the institution provide co-curricular activities that are suitable for the socio-educational experience of students?	Agenda, minutes, or description of co-curricular activities. Interview data.					
Does the institution provide appropriate academic advising to support student development and academic success?	Job description of designated person for academic advising or counselling. Documentary evidence of academic advising, i.e., information on website or catalogue or prospectus. Interview data.					
Does the institution provide financial support for students, when appropriate (e.g. under special circumstances), awards and scholarships?	Policies and procedures on providing financial support, if applicable. Awards and scholarships available for students, including criteria. Statistical details of awards and scholarships and financial support offered. Interview data.					

Criterion 5: Admission, Student Records & Student Services (continued)

Student services

Question	Suggested Evidence/Data	Needs Improvement	Adequate	Good	Excellent	Observations (Strengths & Weaknesses), Commendations and Recommendations
Does the institution provide opportunities for student leadership and for students to contribute, where appropriate, to institutional decision making and governance?	Composition of institutional boards and committees with student representation. Documentary evidence of functioning student association.					
Does the institution allocate adequate staff, with training, for student services functions	List and roles of staff involved in student services related roles.					

Criterion 5: Admission, Student Records & Student Services

---- out of 15

Overall Key Observations (Strengths & Weaknesses), Commendations and Recommendations

(please use additional sheets if required)

Key Observations (Strengths & Weaknesses), Commendations	Recommendations

Criterion 6: Quality Assurance

Quality Assurance

Question	Suggested Evidence/Data	Needs Improvement	Adequate	Good	Excellent	Observations (Strengths & Weaknesses), Commendations and Recommendations
Does the institution have a policy on internal quality assurance?	Related policy documents on quality assurance.					
Does the institution have a system/strategy/mechanism in place for internal quality assurance?	Decisions of the governing body, academic senate/board, and related minutes of meetings. Description of the processes (e.g., information gathering, data collection, surveys, evaluations, consultative meetings) that are undertaken for quality assurance.					
Are key bodies (councils/boards/committees) and institutional leaders involved in the quality assurance system?	Mandates or terms of references of relevant bodies that are involved in quality assurance. Description of the respective role played by various institutional bodies and members of senior management.					

Criterion 6: Quality Assurance

Quality Assurance

Question	Suggested Evidence/Data	Needs Improvement	Adequate	Good	Excellent	Observations (Strengths & Weaknesses), Commendations and Recommendations
Are main or key specific functions of the institutions covered under quality assurance?	Description of the functions (e.g. admission, student induction, teaching, assessment, learning outcomes, technological usage, and so on) covered under internal quality assurance.					
Is the quality assurance process inclusive? Does it ensure adequate participation of staff, academic staff, administrative staff, and students?	Description of the respective roles of key academic staff, administrative and students involved in quality assurance					
Does the institution utilize the outcomes/findings of quality assurance processes for planning and quality improvement?	Follow up activities related to quality assurance.					

Criterion 6: Quality Assurance

---- out of 15

Overall Key Observations (Strengths & Weaknesses), Commendations and Recommendations (please use additional sheets if required)

Key Observations (Strengths & Weaknesses), Commendations	Recommendations

Appendix IV: External Review Panel Report Format

1. Introduction

Provide brief information about the purpose, schedule, and key activities of the review conducted. Provide brief information about the respective higher education institution that was reviewed (e.g., name, brief history, faculties/schools/departments, key academic programmes offered, levels of programmes offered, number of students, and so on).

2. General Findings

Describe the Review Panel's general findings about the higher education institution, including general observations, analysis and conclusions.

3. Performance in relation to the Institutional Audit Criteria

Describe the situation under each criterion and provide commendations and recommendations (if applicable). The tables below are provided as templates to assist in developing the Report.

Additional Guidance on Completing this Section

First, under each criterion, tables are provided with all relevant questions to assist the Panel in completing this section of the Report. These tables include the following columns: (1) Question, (2) Needs Improvement, (3) Adequate (4) Good, (5) Excellent, (6) Observations (Strengths and Weaknesses)/Commendations and (7) Recommendations. The Panel is expected to select one of the rankings (Needs Improvement, Adequate, Good or Excellent) to assess the issue/aspect addressed in each question. Furthermore, it is expected that the Report will include relevant observations (strengths and weaknesses/commendations and recommendations with respect to the issue/aspect addressed in the question.

Needs Improvement: “Needs Improvement” should be selected to mean minimal or non-compliance of the issue/aspect addressed in the respective question. For example, if the question asks “does the institution have a mission statement?”, “Needs Improvement” should be selected if a mission statement is not available or if the existing statement is unsatisfactory.

Adequate: “Adequate” should be selected to mean basic or mere satisfactory compliance of the issue/aspect addressed in the question.

Good: “Good” should be selected if the institution has clearly complied with issue/aspect addressed in the respective question and, in the judgement of the Review Panel, the institution has also provided ample evidence to substantiate its compliance with the issue addressed in the question. “Good” can also denote that the institution has met the expectation of the Review Panel with respect to the relevant question.

Excellent: “Excellent” should be selected if the institution has fully complied with the issue/aspect addressed in the respective question, provided ample documentary related to the respective question, and exceeds the expectation of the Review Panel with respect to relevant issue/aspect addressed in the question.

At the end of each criterion, an additional table is included to assist the Panel to provide an overview of the respective criterion. This table will also ask the Panel to allocate points for each criterion. Apart from Teaching, Learning & Research criterion (which is allocated 25 points), all others are all allocated 15 points each. The Panel is expected to review the performance of the institution with respect to each criterion and arrive at a professional judgment to allocate points for the respective criterion, out of 15 or 25 (depending on the criterion). Below is a guide that could be used in allocating points. The Panel is also expected to provide overall observations/commendation and recommendations for the respective criterion.

Descriptor	Out of 15	Out of 25
Excellent	13-15	21-25
Good	10-12	16-20
Adequate	7-9	11-15
Needs Improvement	6 and below	10 and below

Criterion 1: Governance & Planning

Planning

Question	Needs Improvement	Adequate	Good	Excellent	Key Observations (Strengths & Weaknesses), Commendations	Recommendations
Does the institution have a clearly defined mission statement? Is the mission statement defined within the context of national / (local) development priorities?						
Is the mission guided by a strategic or action plan with specific duration, goals/objectives, strategies or actions?						
Is plan communicated to all members of the institutions (lecturers, administrative staff, and students) and are stakeholders involved in achieving the plan?						
Is the institution achieving its goals/objectives on the plan?						

Criterion 1: Governance & Planning *(Continued)*

Governance

Question	Needs Improvement	Adequate	Good	Excellent	Key Observations (Strengths & Weaknesses), Commendations	Recommendations
Does the institution have an effective and appropriate governance and organizational structure?						
Is there an appropriate body, with the relevant mandate, that oversees the governance/oversight role of the institution?						
Is the governance (including composition of the governing body) and management structure suitable for the institution in terms of size and nature (public or private)?						
Does the institution have a set of principles, codes, or values that govern the institution?						
Is the governing body active?						

Criterion 1: Governance & Planning *(Continued)*

Governance

Question	Needs Improvement	Adequate	Good	Excellent	Key Observations (Strengths & Weaknesses), Commendations	Recommendations
Does the institution have a qualified Vice-Chancellor, Rector, Dean, or a Director who undertake the role of the chief executive officer, who is responsible for academic and financial matters?						
Is the relationship of the CEO to the governing body, and other boards and committees of the institution defined well and appropriate?						

Criterion 1: Governance & Planning

----- out of 15

Overall Key Observations (Strengths & Weaknesses), Commendations and Recommendations __ Needs Improvement __ Adequate __ Good _ Excellent

(please use additional sheets if required)

Key Observations (Strengths & Weaknesses), Commendations	Recommendations

Criterion 2: Teaching, Learning & Research

Academic Programme Development and Review

Question	Needs Improvement	Adequate	Good	Excellent	Key Observations (Strengths & Weaknesses), Commendations	Recommendations
Does the institution have an appropriate body that advises the governing body in setting academic policies, and undertakes oversight responsibilities for academic matters?						
Does the academic senate/board/committee (1) ensure the integrity of academic programmes, credits and qualifications awarded; (2) set standards of student achievement; and (3) ensure systematic and effective academic planning?						
Does the institution have an appropriate system in place for (1) designing new academic programmes, and (2) institutionally approving academic programmes before submitting for MQA approval?						

Criterion 2: Teaching, Learning & Research (Continued)

Academic Programme Development and Review

Question	Needs Improvement	Adequate	Good	Excellent	Key Observations (Strengths & Weaknesses), Commendations	Recommendations
Does the institution have a working mechanism that reviews its academic programmes on a regular cycle by considering evidence of student success and program effectiveness?						

Criterion 2: Teaching, Learning & Research (Continued)

Teaching, Learning & Research

Question	Needs Improvement	Adequate	Good	Excellent	Key Observations (Strengths & Weaknesses), Commendations	Recommendations
Does the institution publish sufficient details of learning goals/objective/outcomes (knowledge, skills, competencies) for each academic programme, for the benefit of prospective students?						
At the beginning of programmes and modules, does the institution inform students about programme/module objectives/learning outcomes, schedule of topics, methods of teaching, the types of assessments, weightage of assessments, timelines for assessments and issuing of results?						
Does the institution engage qualified staff for academic programmes, including those who can teach research methodology and undertake graduate supervision, if graduate level programmes are offered?						

Criterion 2: Teaching, Learning & Research (Continued)

Teaching, Learning & Research

Question	Needs Improvement	Adequate	Good	Excellent	Key Observations (Strengths & Weaknesses), Commendations	Recommendations
Does the institution have guidelines for developing and approving research proposals, providing ethical reviews of proposed research, format/guidelines for writing thesis/dissertations, and a policy and procedure for evaluating the originality and quality of thesis/dissertations.?						
Does the institution regularly monitor teaching of modules to ensure that all teaching and assessing of learning outcomes adhere to that standards for which approval was granted by MQA?						
Does the institution provide a mix of both formative and summative assessments, including examinations, and have mechanisms/arrangements in place for setting, moderating, marking, grading, monitoring and evaluating the assessment methods (examinations and assigned work) for academic programmes and awards?						

Criterion 2: Teaching, Learning & Research (Continued)

Teaching and Learning

Question	Needs Improvement	Adequate	Good	Excellent	Key Observations (Strengths & Weaknesses), Commendations	Recommendations
Does the institution provide constructive and timely feedback for students as an opportunity to improve by reflecting on their own learning?						
Does the institution ensure that students are well informed of the codes of conduct for submission of assignments, project work, and for sitting examinations, and have disciplinary procedures in relation malpractices such as copying, plagiarism and violation of codes of conduct?						
Does the institution have a system to ensure that all module and programme outcomes (including credit and contact hours) are obtained by students, before awarding respective qualifications?						

Criterion 2: Teaching, Learning & Research

----- out of 25

Overall Key Observations (Strengths & Weaknesses), Commendations and Recommendations ___ Needs Improvement ___ Adequate ___ Good ___ Excellent

(please use additional sheets if required)

Key Observations (Strengths & Weaknesses), Commendations	Recommendations

Criterion 3: Staffing

Staffing

Question	Needs Improvement	Adequate	Good	Excellent	Key Observations (Strengths & Weaknesses), Commendations	Recommendations
Does the institution have an appropriate policy on student-academic staff ratio that is conducive for effective teaching?						
Is there an appropriate institutional policy on recruiting qualified academic staff?						
Are all staff members provided with employment contracts in adherence to existing national laws and regulations?						

Criterion 3: Staffing (Continued)

Staffing

Question	Needs Improvement	Adequate	Good	Excellent	Key Observations (Strengths & Weaknesses), Commendations	Recommendations
Are there institutional policies on staff appraisal, promotion, leave, rewards and recognition, grievances, teaching workload, teaching conduct, and dress codes?						
Is there a system to assess training needs, and provide sufficient opportunities for professional development of academic and professional staff members?						

Criterion 3: Staffing

---- out of 15

Overall Key Observations (Strengths & Weaknesses), Commendations and Recommendations ___ Needs Improvement ___ Adequate ___ Good ___ Excellent

(please use additional sheets if required)

Key Observations (Strengths & Weaknesses), Commendations	Recommendations

Criterion 4: Facilities & Resources

Physical Facilities

Question	Needs Improvement	Adequate	Good	Excellent	Key Observations (Strengths & Weaknesses), Commendations	Recommendations
Are there adequate physical facilities and resources, at all locations where teaching is conducted that meet the teaching and administrative needs of the institution?						
Are the facilities safe and secure, and do they provide a conducive learning and working environment?						
Does the institution regularly evaluate the utilization and effectiveness of its facilities and equipment?						

Criterion 4: Facilities & Resources (continued)

Technological Facilities

Question	Needs Improvement	Adequate	Good	Excellent	Key Observations (Strengths & Weaknesses), Commendations	Recommendations
Are there adequate technological facilities (hardware, software and technical staff) to facilitate learning?						
Are there adequate technological facilities for operational activities (e.g. staff and student record keeping)?						
Does the institution plan and update technology to ensure that its technological infrastructure remains adequate to support its mission, operations, academic programmes, and student services?						
Does the institution provide relevant instructional support and training for academic and administrative staff and students in using technologically driven systems and learning platforms?						

Criterion 4: Facilities & Resources (continued)

Financial Resources

Question	Needs Improvement	Adequate	Good	Excellent	Key Observations (Strengths & Weaknesses), Commendations	Recommendations
Are there sufficient financial resources to support and sustain the institution's academic programs and services?						
Does the institution ensure that financial resources are distributed adequately to support the academic activities, student services, physical facilities, maintenance, and planned development activities?						
Does the institution undertake regular internal and external financial auditing, and prepare financial statements in accordance with accounting national standards?						

Criterion 4: Facilities & Resources (continued)

Financial Resources

Question	Needs Improvement	Adequate	Good	Excellent	Key Observations (Strengths & Weaknesses), Commendations	Recommendations
Does the institution engage in realistic multi-year financial planning?						
Does the institution ensure the integrity of its finances through appropriate internal control mechanisms, risk assessment, and timely financial reporting to the governing body?						
Does the institution have sufficient and qualified staff that are available to handle its finances?						

Criterion 4: Facilities & Resources

----- out of 15

Overall Key Observations (Strengths & Weaknesses), Commendations and Recommendations

___ Needs Improvement ___ Adequate ___ Good ___ Excellent

(please use additional sheets if required)

Observations/Commendations	Recommendations

Criterion 5: Admission, Records & Student Services

Admission

Question	Needs Improvement	Adequate	Good	Excellent	Key Observations (Strengths & Weaknesses), Commendations	Recommendations
Does the institution have a well-defined student recruitment and admission policy, with relevant procedures, that meet MQA's entry requirements?						
Does the institution clearly communicate the recruitment and admission policy, and procedures to all prospective students?						
Through recruitment and admission policies, does the institution provide accurate and comprehensive information about fees, other financial obligations, and refund possibilities?						

Criterion 5: Admission, Records & Student Services (continued)

Admission

Question	Needs Improvement	Adequate	Good	Excellent	Key Observations (Strengths & Weaknesses), Commendations	Recommendations
Does the institution have a published policy on granting advanced standing or transfer of credit?						
Is there a secure and consistent mechanism to handle student application, making offers of admissions, and for payment of fees?						
Does the institution ensure that new students are provided with orientation or induction programmes regarding the rules and regulations, facilities, teaching and assessment practices, and facilities available for them?						
Does the admission process identify students who may need additional support						

Criterion 5: Admission, Records & Student Services (continued)

Student Records

Question	Needs Improvement	Adequate	Good	Excellent	Key Observations (Strengths & Weaknesses), Commendations	Recommendations
Is there a system to maintain student records permanently, securely, and confidentially, that includes secure backup (regardless of printed or digital form records)?						
Is there a designated person or unit charged with the responsibility for ensuring timely collection of student records, maintaining of records, and ensuring the credibility of the records?						
Are there adequate policies and procedures in place for releasing of student records and transcripts?						
Does the institution analyze and make available enrolment and graduation statistics, segregated by year, academic programs, level of qualifications, gender, and academic achievements?						

Criterion 5: Admission, Records & Student Services (continued)

Student services

Question	Needs Improvement	Adequate	Good	Excellent	Key Observations (Strengths & Weaknesses), Commendations	Recommendations
Is there a set of co-curricular activities that are suitable for the socio-educational experience of students?						
Does the institution provide appropriate academic advising to support student development and academic success?						
Does the institution provide financial support, when appropriate (e.g. under special circumstances), awards and scholarships?						

Criterion 5: Admission, Records & Student Services (continued)

Student services

Question	Needs Improvement	Adequate	Good	Excellent	Key Observations (Strengths & Weaknesses), Commendations	Recommendations
Does the institution provide opportunities for student leadership and for students to contribute, where appropriate, to institutional decision making and governance?						
Does the institution allocate adequate staff, with training, for student services functions						

Criterion 5: Admission, Records & Student Services

----- out of 15

Overall Key Observations (Strengths & Weaknesses), Commendations and Recommendations ___ Needs Improvement ___ Adequate ___ Good ___ Excellent
(please use additional sheets if required)

Key Observations (Strengths & Weaknesses), Commendations	Recommendations

Criterion 6: Quality Assurance

Quality Assurance

Question	Needs Improvement	Adequate	Good	Excellent	Key Observations (Strengths & Weaknesses), Commendations	Recommendations
Does the institution have a policy on internal quality assurance and is the policy readily available?						
Does the institution have a system/strategy/mechanism in place for internal quality assurance?						
Are all key bodies (councils/boards/committees) and institutional leaders involved in the internal quality assurance system?						

Criterion 6: Quality Assurance

Quality Assurance

Question	Needs Improvement	Adequate	Good	Excellent	Key Observations (Strengths & Weaknesses), Commendations	Recommendations
Are the main or key academic and administrative functions covered under quality assurance?						
Does the institution ensure adequate participation of academic and administrative staff, and students?						
Does the institution utilize the outcomes/findings of the quality assurance processes for further planning and quality improvement?						

Criterion 6: Quality Assurance

----- out of 15

Overall Key Observations (Strengths & Weaknesses), Commendations and Recommendations ___ Needs Improvement ___ Adequate ___ Good ___ Excellent
(please use additional sheets if required)

Key Observations (Strengths & Weaknesses), Commendations	Recommendations