Code of Practice for Institutional Audit
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Foreword

The National Accreditation Board (Lembaga Akreditasi Negara, LAN) was established in 1998 to quality assure private higher education in Malaysia. Quality assurance of public higher education institutions was entrusted to the Quality Assurance Division (QAD) of the Ministry of Higher Education. In 2005, the Malaysian Cabinet decided to merge LAN and QAD into a single quality assurance body. Thus, the Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA) was born under the Malaysian Qualifications Agency Act 2007. Concurrently, the Malaysian Qualifications Framework (MQF) was developed to unify and harmonise all Malaysian qualifications.

This development is in line with Malaysia's long term development plans as well as the Ministry of Higher Education's aspiration for the transformation of higher education in the country. These reflect a maturing Malaysian higher education system that encourage providers to adopt a more systematic and holistic approach in the provision of quality education.

Assigned the task to ensure quality in higher education in the spirit of the MQF, the MQA has developed a series of guidelines, standards and codes of practice to assist the higher education providers enhance its academic performance and institutional effectiveness. Key among this, are the Code of Practice for Programme Accreditation (COPPA) and Code of Practice for Institutional Audit (COPIA).

COPPA and COPIA are intended to be a useful guide for providers of higher education, quality assurance auditors, officers of the MQA, policy makers, professional bodies and other stakeholders engaged in higher education. The Codes contain an overview of the Malaysian quality assurance system for higher education. They guide the reader on the nine evaluation areas for quality assurance as well as the two levels of standards – benchmarked and enhanced standards – that underline them. In addition, the two documents provide guidance for internal quality audit to be conducted by the institution and external audit to be conducted by the MQA's panel of auditors. They also include audit visit schedules as well as guidelines on report writing.

COPPA and COPIA have been developed by bringing together the good practices adopted by the QAD and LAN, with inputs from experts and stakeholders via a series of focus group discussions. They were also benchmarked against international best practices. In doing this, references have been made to quality assurance practices of MQA's counterparts, which include the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) of the United Kingdom, Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA), the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA), Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications (HKCAAVQ), South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) and National Accreditation and Assessment Council (NAAC) of India.
Quality assurance is an ongoing process and it is the responsibility of all parties involved. Thus, it is of utmost importance for MQA to continuously review its quality assurance practices to ensure their relevancy, reliability, adaptability and effectiveness to address the ever changing environment within which the higher education operates. The MQA hopes that both COPPA and COPIA would assist institutions to enhance their quality provisions through the self-review and internal audit processes as well as the external audit conducted by the MQA. In the spirit of shared responsibility and balancing the demands of autonomy, flexibility and accountability, the MQA looks forward to continuous collaboration with all stakeholders in enhancing the quality of higher education in Malaysia.

On behalf of the MQA, I wish to extend our sincere appreciation and gratitude to all those who have contributed towards the preparation of these Codes of Practice. It is our hope that these codes will serve the purpose of our common endeavour to achieve higher education of the highest quality.

Datuk Dr. Muhammad Rais Abdul Karim
Chairman, Malaysian Qualifications Agency
Petaling Jaya, 1 June 2008
**Benchmark Data**
Benchmark data are information collected from other relevant sources to determine how they achieve their high levels of performance.

**Formative Assessment**
Formative assessment is the assessment of student progress throughout a course, in which the feedback from the learning activities is used to improve student attainment.

**Good Practices**
Good practices are a set of internationally accepted standards, which are expected to be fulfilled to maintain high quality.

**Higher Education Provider**
A higher education provider is a body corporate, organisation or other body of persons which conducts higher education or training programmes leading to the award of a higher education qualification.

**Institutional Audit**
Institutional Audit is an external evaluation of an institution to determine whether it is achieving its mission and goals, to identify strengths and areas of concern, and to enhance quality.

**Internal Quality Audit**
An internal quality audit is an evaluation conducted internally by a higher education provider to determine whether it is achieving its mission and goals; to identify strengths and areas of concern, and to enhance quality. It generates a Self-Review Portfolio.

**Learning Outcomes**
Learning outcomes are statements on what students should know, understand and can do upon the completion of a period of study.

**Longitudinal study**
A longitudinal study involves repeated observations of the same items or phenomena over a long period of time.

**Modules**
Modules are components of a programme. The term modules is used interchangeably with subjects, units, or courses.

**MQF Level**
An MQF level, as described in the Malaysian Qualifications Framework (MQF) document, is an award level described with generic learning outcomes and qualification descriptors which characterises a typical qualification.
Programme
A programme is an arrangement of courses that are structured for a specified duration and learning volume to achieve the stated learning outcomes leading to an award of a qualification.

Programme Accreditation
Programme accreditation is an exercise to accredit the teaching, learning and all other related activities to a programme provided by a higher education provider.

Quality Assurance
Quality assurance comprises all those planned and systematic actions (policies, strategies, attitudes, procedures and activities) necessary to provide adequate demonstration that quality is being maintained and enhanced, and the products and services meet the specified quality standards. In higher education, quality assurance is the totality of systems, resources and information devoted to maintaining and improving the quality and standards of teaching, scholarship and research as well as students’ learning experience.

Quality Enhancement
Quality enhancement are the steps taken to bring about continual improvement in quality.

Self-Review Portfolio
A Self-Review Portfolio is a portfolio generated by an Internal Quality Audit, which is submitted to the MQA for the purpose of an Institutional Audit.

Self-Review Report
Self-Review Report is a report done and submitted by a higher education provider that demonstrates that it has achieved the standards as required in the areas that are evaluated.

Student Learning Experience
Student learning experience comprises the entire educational experience of a student whilst studying a Programme.

Summative Assessment
Summative assessment is the assessment of learning, which summarises the progress of the learner at a particular time and is used to assign the learner a course grade.
# Abbreviations

1. **HEP**  
   Higher Education Provider
2. **COPIA**  
   Code of Practice for Institutional Audit
3. **COPPA**  
   Code of Practice for Programme Accreditation
4. **MOHE**  
   Ministry of Higher Education
5. **MQA**  
   Malaysian Qualifications Agency
6. **MQF**  
   Malaysian Qualifications Framework
7. **MQR**  
   Malaysian Qualifications Register
8. **QA**  
   Quality Assurance
9. **SAI**  
   Self-Accrediting Institution
10. **SRP**  
    Self-Review Portfolio
Section 1: An Overview of Quality Assurance of Malaysian Higher Education

Section 2: Guidelines on Criteria and Standards for Higher Education Provider

Section 3: The Internal Quality Audit

Section 4: The Institutional Audit

Section 5: The Panel of Auditors

Section 6: Guidelines for Preparing the Institutional Audit Report
INTRODUCTION

The Ninth Malaysia Plan (2006-2010) advocates the development of a world class human capital. The Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) has incorporated this vision as one of its primary objectives under its Strategic Plan, in line with the national agenda to make Malaysia as a preferred centre to pursue higher education.

1. THE MALAYSIAN QUALIFICATIONS AGENCY

In December 2005, the Cabinet decided to merge the National Accreditation Board (Lembaga Akreditasi Negara, LAN) and the Quality Assurance Division (QAD) of the MOHE. This merger created the Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA), the single quality assurance agency in the country, whose scope now covers both the public and private higher education providers (HEPs).

The Malaysian Qualifications Agency Act 2007 (MQAA 2007) assigns the responsibility for quality assuring higher education in Malaysia to the MQA. The responsibilities are to:

- implement the Malaysian Qualifications Framework (MQF) as a reference point for the Malaysian qualifications;
- develop standards and criteria and all other relevant instruments as a national references for the conferment of awards with the co-operation of stakeholders;
- quality assure higher education providers and programmes;
- accredit programmes that fulfil a set of criteria and standards;
- facilitate the recognition and articulation of qualifications;
- establish and maintain the Malaysian Qualifications Register (MQR); and
- advise the Minister on any matter relating to quality assurance in higher education.

2. THE MALAYSIAN QUALIFICATIONS AGENCY COUNCIL

The MQA is headed by a Council. It comprises of a Chairman and 16 members. The functions of the Council are to:

- approve plans and policies for the management of the Agency;
- to approve any amendment or update of the MQF;
- to approve policies and guidelines relating to audit processes and the accreditation of programmes, qualifications and higher education providers;
- to receive and monitor reports, returns, statements and any other information relating to accreditation, institutional audit and evaluation; and
• to continuously guide the Agency in its function as a quality assurance body and do all things reasonably necessary for the performance of its functions under the Act.

3. COMMITTEES

From time to time the Agency may establish committees for various purposes, including to provide input for policy decisions. These committees consist of resource persons who possess in-depth or specialised knowledge and experience in their respective disciplines to perform such duties as prescribed under the MQAA 2007. Among the major committees are:

3.1 Accreditation Committees

The Accreditation Committee has the following functions:

• To receive institutional programme audit reports and make recommendations on the HEP’s applications for provisional or full accreditation of programmes and qualifications;
• To evaluate and analyse accreditation reports; and
• To grant, refuse or revoke provisional accreditation or full accreditation of programmes and qualifications.

3.2 Institutional Audit Committee

An Institutional Audit committee has the following functions:

• To evaluate and analyse institutional audit reports;
• To make recommendations for the maintenance, suspension or revocation of accreditation;
• To determine the state of academic health following an Academic Performance Audit (APA); and
• To recommend the awarding or otherwise of an institutional self-accreditation status.

The composition of the institutional audit committee and the procedures of institutional audit may differ according to the purpose of the audit.

3.3 The Equivalency Committee

All programmes offered in Malaysia must establish their equivalency level vis a vis the MQF. The Equivalency Committee has the following functions:
• To receive and analyse equivalency assessment reports of programme or qualification; and
• To make decision on the equivalency of qualifications for the purpose of admissions, placement of qualifications in the MQF, or other related purposes.

3.4 The Standards Committees

The Standards Committees have the following functions:
• To develop and review the guidelines, standards and criteria for programme accreditation and institutional audit;
• To develop and review standards for various disciplines; and
• To develop and review guides to good practices.

The guidelines, standards and criteria are done in consultation with principal stakeholders and various focus groups. These documents require the final approval of the MQA Council.

4. THE MALAYSIAN QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK

The Malaysian Qualifications Framework (MQF) serves as a basis for quality assurance of higher education and as the reference point for national qualifications. It is an instrument that classifies qualifications based on a set of criteria that are approved nationally and benchmarked against international best practices. These criteria are accepted and used for all qualifications awarded by a recognised higher education provider. The Framework also clarifies the academic levels, learning outcomes and credit systems based on student academic load. Hence, the MQF integrates with and links all national qualifications. It also provides educational pathways through which it links qualifications systematically. These pathways will enable the individual to progress through credit transfers and accreditation of prior experiential learning in the context of lifelong learning.

5. TYPES OF QUALITY ASSURANCE

The work of the MQA revolves around three distinct types of quality assurance. The first type is known as Provisional Accreditation, which is connected to seeking approval from the MOHE to conduct new programmes. The second type is Full Accreditation, i.e., a conferment to denote that a programme has met all the criteria and standards set for that purpose. The third type is called Institutional Audit, which takes many forms. It could be institutional or thematic; it could be by faculty or across faculties. It could take the form of periodic academic performance audit on all universities or to establish the continuation or maintenance of programme accreditation status. It could take the form of
an exercise for purposes of verifying data, for purposes of public policy input or for rating and ranking of institutions and programmes. The highest form of institutional audit is the self-accreditation audit, which can lead to a conferment of a self-accreditation status for the institution so audited, whereby the institution can accredit its own programmes. The quality assurance processes generally include periodic monitoring.

6. THE MALAYSIAN QUALIFICATIONS REGISTER

The Malaysian Qualifications Register (MQR) is a registry of all accredited Malaysian higher education qualifications. The MQR contains, among others, information on programmes, providers, levels and validity periods or cessation dates of these qualifications. It is meant to provide students, parents, employers, funding agencies and other related stakeholders with the necessary information.


7. THE QUALITY ASSURANCE GUIDELINES

7.1 Quality Assurance Documents

The quality assurance evaluation would be guided by:

- The Malaysian Qualifications Framework (MQF);
- The Code of Practice for Programme Accreditation (COPPA);
- The Code of Practice for Institutional Audit (COPIA);
- Programme Discipline Standards; and
- Guides to Good Practices.

This Code of Practice for Institutional Audit (COPIA) is adapted from the “Code of Practice for Quality Assurance in Public Universities of Malaysia” (2002) published by the QAD of the MOHE. Also, LAN had a series of Guidelines and Standards for programme accreditation, which will continue to complement COPPA and COPIA. MQA will continue to develop programme standards and guides to good practices to cover the whole range of disciplines and good practices, and to review them from time to time.

7.2 Areas of Evaluation

The quality evaluation process is based on the following nine areas:

- Vision, mission, educational goals and learning outcomes;
• Curriculum design and delivery;
• Assessment of students;
• Student selection and support services;
• Academic staff;
• Educational resources;
• Programme monitoring and review;
• Leadership, governance and administration; and
• Total continual quality improvement.

Each of these nine areas contains quality standards and criteria. These criteria have two distinct levels, i.e., benchmarked standards and enhanced standards. Depending on the type and level of assessments, HEPs are required to fulfil these standards partially or fully.

Generally, the MQA subscribes to the shift from a fitness of purpose to a fitness for specified purpose. However, in the current stage of the development of Malaysian higher education and its quality assurance processes, there is a need to ensure that the HEPs fulfil the benchmarked standards. Nevertheless, the size, nature and diversity of the institutions call for flexibility wherever appropriate. Where necessary, HEPs may need to provide additional information to explain why certain standards are not applicable to their case when preparing their documents for submission to the MQA.

8. INSTITUTIONAL AUDIT

There are two main components of an institutional audit; the HEP Self-Review (internal quality audit) and the MQA Institutional Audit (external quality audit).

The self-review is done by the institution and is the main component of the document submitted to the MQA for evaluation by the Audit Panel.

The institutional audit is an external and independent audit conducted by MQA through a panel of auditors, who would evaluate the self-review as well as visit the institution to validate and verify information given by the HEP and submit the final report to the MQA.

8.1 Report to the Higher Education Provider: Continual Quality Improvement

The most important purpose of the report is continual quality improvement of the HEP. The feedback process in the form of the oral exit reports and written reports induces accountability and reinforces the continual quality improvement process by validating the HEP’s strengths and areas of concern.
The written report is narrative and aims to be informative. It recognises context and allows comparison over time. It discerns strengths and areas of concern as well as provides specific recommendations for quality enhancement in the structure and performance of the HEP, based on peer experience and the consensus on quality as embodied in the standards.

8.2 Report to the Ministry of Higher Education

The institutional audit report is submitted to the Ministry of Higher Education where it can be used for policy decisions to assist HEPs improve their quality and standards, and in the case of self-accrediting audit, for granting self-accrediting status.

8.3 Report for the Public

A summary report is made accessible to the public. The report contains information that would be helpful to prospective students and employers.

The quality assurance reports can be used for benchmarking and for revising quality standards and practices. Benchmarking focuses on how to improve the educational process by exploiting the best approaches adopted by institutions around the world. Adopting best practices provides the HEP the opportunity to gain strategic, operational and financial advantage.
INTRODUCTION

These guidelines recommend practices that are in line with internationally recognised good practices. They are aimed at helping higher education providers (HEPs) attain at least benchmarked standards in each aspect of higher education and to stimulate them to continuously improve their programmes. All these are in support of the national aspiration of making Malaysia the centre for educational excellence.

The guidelines are designed to encourage diversity of approach that is compatible with national and global human resources requirements. The guidelines define requirements for higher education in broad terms, within which individual HEPs can creatively design their programmes of study and to appropriately allocate resources in accordance with their stated vision, mission, educational goals and learning outcomes.

The guidelines are divided into nine areas:
1. Vision, Mission, Educational Goals and Learning Outcomes;
2. Curriculum Design and Delivery;
3. Assessment of Students;
4. Student Selection and Support Services;
5. Academic Staff;
6. Educational Resources;
7. Programme Monitoring and Review;
8. Leadership, Governance and Administration; and

The standards define the expected level of attainment for each criterion and serve as a performance indicator. Standards are specified at two levels of attainment: benchmarked standard and enhanced standard.

Benchmarked standards are standards that must be met and compliance demonstrated during institutional audit. Benchmark standards are expressed as a “must”.

Enhanced standards are standards that should be met as the institution strives to continuously improve itself. Enhanced standards reflect international and national consensus on good practices in higher education. HEPs should be able to demonstrate achievement of some or all of these or that initiatives toward the achievement of these standards are underway. Achievement of these standards will vary with the stage of development of the HEPs, their resources and policies. Enhanced standards are expressed by a “should”.


The use of two levels recognises the fact that HEPs are at different stages of development and emphasises that quality improvement is a continual process. Hence, there must be flexibility and recognition of diversity in order to facilitate the creative growth of education.

Specific criteria are spelt out for each area. These are operationally defined and serve as performance indicators of quality.

1. **VISION, MISSION, EDUCATIONAL GOALS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES**

1.1 **Statements of Vision, Mission and Educational Goals**

The vision, mission and goals of education set the direction of the HEP, guide academic planning and implementation as well as bring together all its members to a single focus for striving towards world-class achievement and a tradition of excellence. The educational goals describe the crucial characteristics of the outcomes and processes of higher education that is in keeping with national aspirations and global importance. The general goal of higher education is to produce broadly educated graduates through the:

- provision of knowledge and practical skills based on scientific principles;
- inculcation of attitudes, ethics, sense of professionalism and leadership skills for societal advancement within the framework of the national vision;
- nurturing of the ability to analyse and solve problems as well as to evaluate and make decisions critically and creatively based on evidence and experience;
- development of the quest for knowledge and life-long learning skills that are essential for continuous upgrading of knowledge and skills that parallel the rapid advancement in global knowledge; and
- consideration of other issues that are relevant to the local, national and international context.

1.1.1 **Benchmarked Standards**

- Every HEP must state its vision, mission and educational goals and make them known to its internal and external stakeholders.
- The mission statements and educational goals must reflect the crucial elements of the processes and outcomes of higher education that is in line with national and global developments.
- The HEP must formulate educational goals consistent with HEP’s vision and mission.
- The vision, mission, and educational goals must be approved by the governing board or other appropriate body.
- Appropriate publications must accurately cite the current vision and mission statements.
1.1.2 Enhanced Standards

• The mission and goals **should** encompass leadership qualities in the areas of social responsibility, research attainment, community involvement, ethical values, professionalism, and knowledge creation.

• The HEP **should** demonstrate that its planning and evaluation processes, educational programmes, educational support services, financial and physical resources, and administrative processes are adequate and appropriate to fulfil its stated purpose of mission and goals.

1.2 Participation in the Formulation of Vision, Mission and Educational Goals

HEPs are responsible for designing and implementing programmes that are appropriate to their missions and goals.

1.2.1 Benchmarked Standards

• The vision, mission and goals **must** be developed in consultation with principal stakeholders which may include school or faculty (staff and students), administration and governing board, alumni, industry and the government.

1.2.2 Enhanced Standards

• The vision, mission and goals **should** be reviewed in consultation with a wider range of stakeholders that may include the community, non-governmental organisations and international peers.

1.3 Academic Autonomy

Each HEP must have specific autonomy over academic matters.

1.3.1 Benchmarked Standards

• The programme and its activities **must** be conducted in an ethical manner.

• The HEP **must** have appropriate autonomy to design the curriculum and to allocate the resources necessary for its implementation to ensure the achievement of learning outcomes.

• Where applicable, the above provision **must** also cover programmes franchised or licensed to other collaborative HEPs in accordance with national policies.

• The contributions of the academic staff **must** be focussed on curriculum development and implementation, on social responsibility, on academic supervision of students, on research and writing, on scholarly activities and community engagement in achieving the vision, mission and goals of the HEP.
1.3.2 Enhanced Standards

- The HEP **should** have a policy on conflict of interest, particularly in the area of private practice and part-time employment.

1.4 Learning Outcomes

The quality of the HEP is ultimately assessed by the ability of its graduates to carry out their expected roles and responsibilities in society. This requires a clear definition of the competencies that are expected to be achieved at graduation and these should reflect the level of competencies expected in the Malaysian Qualifications Framework (MQF).

1.4.1 Benchmarked Standards

- The HEP **must** formulate learning outcomes and educational goals consistent with its vision and mission.
- The HEP **must** define the specific competencies that students should demonstrate upon completion of the period of study.
- The competencies **must** include mastery of body of knowledge; practical skills; social skills and responsibility; ethics and professionalism; scientific method, critical thinking and problem solving; communication skills and team work; information management and lifelong learning; and entrepreneurship and management.

1.4.2 Enhanced Standards

- The HEP **should** specify the link between competencies expected at completion of studies and those required during career undertakings and further studies.

2. CURRICULUM DESIGN AND DELIVERY

The quality of the HEP is ultimately assessed by the ability of its graduates to carry out their expected roles and responsibilities in society. This requires a clear definition of the competencies that are expected to be achieved upon completion of a period of study and these should reflect the level of competencies, defined as learning outcomes, expected in the MQF.

2.1 Curriculum Design and Teaching-Learning Methods

2.1.1 Benchmarked Standards

- The HEP **must** have a clearly defined process by which the curriculum is established, reviewed and evaluated. This process must recognise the various roles of the faculty, the administration and the governing board.
• Where required, all educational programmes **must** be considered only after a needs assessment has been completed.

• All educational programmes **must** be considered only after the resources to support the programmes have been identified.

• All aspects of the educational programmes **must** be related to the HEP’s vision and mission.

• The HEP **must** show that the educational content and approach, and the teaching-learning methods are appropriate, consistent with and support the attainment of the learning outcomes.

• There **must** be a variety of teaching-learning methods to inculcate intellectual and practical skills, as well as positive attitudes.

• The teaching-learning methods **must** ensure that students take responsibility for their own learning and prepare them for lifelong learning.

### 2.1.2 Enhanced Standards

• The curriculum **should** encourage multi-disciplinary approaches to enhance personal development through electives, study pathways and other means which should be monitored and appraised.

• There **should** be co-curricular activities that will enrich students’ experiences, foster personal development and responsibility.

### 2.2 Curriculum Content and Structure

The HEP **must** demonstrate that an effective relationship exists between curricula content and current practices in the field of specialisation.

#### 2.2.1 Benchmarked Standards

• Academic programmes **must** incorporate core disciplines that are essential for understanding the concepts, principles and methods that support the programme outcomes.

• Academic programmes **must** fulfil the requirements for the core disciplines for an award to be given in the major or minor fields taking into account the appropriate discipline standards and international best practices for the field.

• The content of the core disciplines **must** be reviewed from time to time to up-date with scientific, technological and knowledge development, and to meet the needs of society.

#### 2.2.2 Enhanced Standards

• The HEP **should** establish mechanisms for identifying topics of contemporary importance at local, national and global levels for appropriate inclusion in the curriculum.
2.3 Management of Programmes

2.3.1 Benchmarked Standards

- Students must be provided with written information about the programme aims, programme outlines and learning outcomes, and the methods of assessment of each course or module within the programme.
- Each programme must have a leader and a team of appropriate academic staff (e.g., programme committee or team) that is responsible for the planning, implementation and improvement of the programme where applicable.
- Academic programme team must have authority and established procedures for planning and monitoring the programme.
- The programme team must be given adequate resources to implement the teaching-learning activities, and conduct programme evaluation for quality improvements.
- Teaching and learning must also be evaluated regularly and the results used to ensure quality.
- The HEP must provide for its students an appropriate learning environment in which scholarly and creative achievement is encouraged.

2.3.2 Enhanced Standards

- There should be appropriate stakeholder representation or consultation in the development and review of the programmes.
- The HEP should have effective structures and processes when setting the necessary criteria and standards for the qualifications awarded.
- Innovation to improve teaching and learning should be adequately supported and critically evaluated.

2.4 Linkages with External Stakeholders

Linkages with stakeholders outside the HEP, particularly at the operational level, are crucial for identifying and clarifying the specific elements and their interrelationships in the planning and implementation of programmes of study. The linkages are best developed and maintained at all levels of training in the local, national, regional and global contexts.

2.4.1 Benchmarked Standards

- Programmes must have linkages with stakeholders outside the HEP at the local, national, regional or global levels for the purposes of planning, implementation and review.
2.4.2 Enhanced Standards
- The programme team should obtain feedback from employers and use the information for curriculum improvement.
- Students should be given the opportunity to develop linkages with external stakeholders.

2.5 Articulation Regulations, and Credit Transfer and Exemption

2.5.1 Benchmarked Standards
- HEP must have well-defined and effectively disseminated policies, regulations and processes concerning articulation practices, and credit transfers and exemptions.

2.5.2 Enhanced Standards
- The HEP should always be in touch with the latest development and thinking about processes of articulation, credit transfers and credit exemptions including cross-border collaborative provisions.

3. ASSESSMENT OF STUDENTS

Assessment of students is an important aspect of quality assurance because assessment methods drive student learning and the outcome of assessment is used in awarding qualifications. Hence, methods of student assessment have to be clear and must support the learning outcomes. Summative assessments must be able to reflect that the student has achieved the programme learning outcomes.

3.1 Relationship Between Assessment and Learning

3.1.1 Benchmarked Standards
- Assessment principles, processes, methods and practices must be aligned with learning outcomes and programme content.
- The process and methods of assessment must reflect the change to the programme outcomes from any review exercise.
- The assessment must be consistent with the levels defined in the MQF and the MQF eight domains of learning outcomes (e.g., critical thinking, problem solving, integrated learning, lifelong learning).

3.1.2 Enhanced Standards
- Assessment methodology should be reviewed periodically to ensure currency with development in best practices.
3.2 Assessment Methods

3.2.1 Benchmarked Standards
• The frequency and methods of student assessment, including the grading criteria and all awards, must be documented and communicated to students on commencement of the programme.
• The assessment methods must comprise of summative and formative purposes as well as theory and practical assessments which are compatible with the learning outcomes.
• A variety of methods and tools must be used appropriately for assessing the given learning outcomes and competencies such as communication, problem solving, teamwork and self-directed learning.
• There must be mechanisms to ensure the validity, reliability and fairness of the assessment system.

3.2.2 Enhanced Standards
• Methods of assessing should be comparable to international best practices.
• The assessment systems should be reviewed periodically.

3.3 Management of Student Assessment

The management of the assessment system is intrinsically linked to the HEP's responsibility as a body that confers qualifications and other awards of national and international standing. The robustness and security of the processes and procedures related to student assessment are important in inspiring confidence in the quality of the qualifications that are awarded by the HEP.

3.3.1 Benchmarked Standards
• The programme grading, assessment and appeal policies must be published and practices must be consistent with the policy.
• The programme must identify the process whereby changes to regulations made are communicated to students and demonstrate compliance with the process.
• There must be mechanism to ensure the security of all documents and records related to assessment.

3.3.2 Enhanced Standards
• The programme team should have mechanisms to review and implement new methods of assessment.
• Representatives of relevant stakeholders should be involved in assessment review exercises.
4. STUDENT SELECTION AND SUPPORT SERVICES

4.1 Admission and Selection

Admission policies must comply with prevailing MOHE policies. There is no one best method of student selection. Whatever method is selected, the HEP must be able to defend it consistently. Appropriate developmental or remedial support must be available to assist students. The number of students to be admitted is determined by the resources of the HEP and the number of qualified applicants.

4.1.1 Benchmarked Standards

- The HEP must have an admission policy with clear statements on the criteria and processes of student selection including transferring students.
- The criteria and processes of selection must be published and disseminated to students subject to existing policies.
- Pre-requisite knowledge and skills must be clearly stated and must neither be too broad nor too narrow for each programme or discipline.
- If a selection interview is used, the HEP must demonstrate that it is objectively and fairly structured.
- Student selection must be free from discrimination and bias.
- The HEP must provide evidence that it selects students whose capabilities are consistent with the admission policies.
- There must be a clear policy for appeal and appropriate mechanisms where applicable.
- The relationship between student selection, the educational programme and the desired characteristics of graduates must be stated.
- HEP must offer appropriate developmental or remedial support to assist students who do not meet the academic competency level. Diagnostic testing is an important aspect of a developmental or remedial programme.
- HEP admission and retention policies must not be compromised to maintain a desired enrolment.
- The size of student intake for each session must be stated and related to the capacity of the HEP to effectively deliver the programmes at all stages of education and training subject to stated conditions where applicable.
- Visiting, exchange or transfer students must be accounted for to ensure the adequacy of the HEP's resources to accommodate additional students.
- If campuses are geographically separated, the selection and assignment of all students must be the ultimate responsibility of the awarding HEP subject to national policies.
4.1.2 Enhanced Standards

- The admission policy should be reviewed periodically to reflect the social responsibilities of the HEP, the language requirements, the changing human resource and societal needs and opportunities for lifelong learning.
- The outcome of selection and student performance should be monitored to improve the selection processes.
- The size of student intake should be reviewed in consultation with relevant stakeholders and modified periodically to meet the needs of society and the country.
- Student intake should include a consideration of gender and ethnic balance and social responsibilities such as special policies for disadvantaged students.

4.2 Transfer of Students

The diversity of curriculum requires that application for transfer between programmes or HEPs be considered on an individual basis, so that both the student and the HEP will be assured that courses taken previously are compatible with the programmes to be entered; otherwise there should be evidence of supplementation of a student’s programme after transfer. It is essential that students accepted for transfer demonstrate achievements that are comparable to those of the students in the class they seek to join.

4.2.1 Benchmarked Standards

- The HEP must have a well disseminated policy with clear criteria, mechanisms and processes, both academic and non-academic, to enable qualified students to transfer to another programme.

4.2.2 Enhanced Standards

- The HEP should have in place policies and mechanisms that facilitate student mobility between programmes and institutions, within the country or cross-border through articulation arrangements, joint degrees, exchange semesters, advanced standing arrangements and the like.

4.3 Student Support Services and Co-Curricular Activities

Student support facilitates learning and wholesome personal development. It includes physical amenities and services such as recreation, arts and culture, accommodation, transport, safety, food, health, finance, academic advice and counselling, and must recognise the requirements of students with special needs. Students facing personal, relationship or identity problems can be helped through professional counselling.

Career counselling can help students make more informed programme and career choices by examining students’ approach to career planning and suggesting appropriate resources to guide them.
4.3.1 Benchmarked Standards
- The HEP **must** make available appropriate and adequate student support services, such as physical, social, recreational and sporting facilities. These must be evaluated regularly to ensure their adequacy and safety.
- There **must** be a mechanism for grievances and appeal relating to student support services.
- The HEP **must** clearly designate an administrative unit responsible for planning and implementing student support services and staffed by individuals who have appropriate experience consistent with their assignments.
- Counselling **must** be provided by adequate and qualified staff and all issues pertaining to counselling **must** remain confidential.
- An effective induction to the programme **must** be made available to all students and evaluated regularly. Special attention **must** be given to out of state and international students.

4.3.2 Enhanced Standards
- Student support services **should** be given appropriate organisational status within the HEP given the significant role they play.
- Student academic and non-academic counselling **should** include ongoing monitoring of the student’s progress.
- An equipped and well-staffed unit dedicated to academic and non-academic counselling **should** be established.

4.4 Student Representation

The participation of students in various institutional activities inculcates self-confidence for leadership and provides experience in education and related matters. By involving students, it will also be easier for the HEP to obtain their feedback. Student publications can also contribute to an atmosphere of responsible intellectual discourse.

4.4.1 Benchmarked Standards
- The HEP **must** have a policy on student representation and should respect the national policy and law.
- The HEP **must** publish a statement of student rights and responsibilities and make it available to the campus community.
- The jurisdiction of judicial bodies, the disciplinary responsibilities of HEP officials, and all disciplinary procedures **must** be clearly defined and broadly disseminated.

4.4.2 Enhanced Standards
- Student activities and student organisations **should** be facilitated to provide managerial and leadership experience, to inculcate a sense of belonging and responsibility, and to encourage active citizenship.
• When student publications or other media exist, the HEP **should** provide a written statement of its policies regarding such publications.

• Students **should** have appropriate participation in the formulation, management and evaluation of the curriculum, and in other academic matters relevant to students.

### 4.5 Alumni

#### 4.5.1 Benchmarked Standards

Not applicable.

#### 4.5.2 Enhanced Standards

• The views of the alumni **should** be incorporated in curriculum development, the achievement of the learning outcomes and the future direction of the HEP.

### 5. ACADEMIC STAFF

The quality of academic staff is the most important component in assuring the quality of higher education and thus every effort must be taken to establish service, development and appraisal policies that are conducive to staff productivity and to ensure that every programme has appropriately qualified staff sufficient for the number of students enrolled. The HEP should provide the appropriate working conditions to recruit and retain its academic staff.

Teaching, research and providing expert services are three inter-related academic activities. Nevertheless, it must be acknowledged that not all academic staff can be equally involved in all three activities if the HEP is to excel in its three core missions of teaching, research, and service. For each appointment, the HEP should provide:

• clear explanation about the responsibilities, roles and equitable distribution of the various roles in teaching, research, consultancy, or expert services and administration;

• community involvement that contributes to the quality of education and improvement of the quality of life of the community; and

• professional and ethical expectation.

The equitable work distribution is used in recognising meritorious contribution for the purpose of promotion, salary determination or other incentives. It is also crucial to provide systematic training for upgrading all aspects of academic skills.
5.1 Recruitment and Management

5.1.1 Benchmarked Standards
- The HEP must have a clear and documented staff recruitment policy related to qualifications, expertise, responsibilities and incentives. The criteria for staff selection must include recognition of meritorious academic and other activities that can be measured by formal qualifications, research and teaching output, other employment and social achievements, as well as peer recognition.
- The staff to student ratio for each programme must be appropriate to the teaching-learning methodologies and discipline standards.
- The core staff for implementing each programme must be determined.
- The HEP must clarify the roles of the academic staff in teaching, research and scholarly activities, consultancy, community services and administrative functions.
- The HEP policy must reflect an equitable distribution of responsibilities among the academic staff.
- The equitable work distribution and meritorious academic roles must be recognised and appropriately rewarded through promotion, salary increment or other remuneration using clear and transparent policies and procedures.
- The HEP must have clear policies, criteria and processes in awarding academic positions, for example Professorship and Associate Professorship, which are in line with national policy and international best practices.

5.1.2 Enhanced Standards
- The recruitment policy should seek a balance between senior and junior academic staff, between academic and non-academic staff, and between full-time and part-time staff. The responsibilities of each must be explicitly specified.

5.2 Service and Development

5.2.1 Benchmarked Standards
- The HEP must provide for an effective staff development.
- The staff policy must address matters related to service, development and appraisal of staff.
- The HEP must provide mentoring and formative guidance for new staff as part of the staff development programme.
- The academic staff must be provided with training, necessary tools and technology for self-learning, access to information and for communication.
- The HEP must provide for a suitable environment for the student appraisal of the academic staff.
5.2.2 Enhanced Standards

- The HEP should provide for a suitable academic staff appraisal of their participation in professional, academic and other relevant activities, national and international, and demonstrates that it uses the results of this appraisal for improvement of the student experience.
- The HEP should have appropriate provision to allow for advanced staff enhancement through research leave, sabbatical, and sponsored participation in, and organisation of, conferences.

6. EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

Adequate educational resources are necessary to support teaching-learning activities. These resources include financial resources, expertise, physical infrastructure, information facilities, communication technology facilities, and research facilities.

Physical facilities include the space and the necessary equipment and facilities for administration, for large and small group learning, (e.g., libraries, resource centres, lecture halls, auditorium, tutorial rooms), for practical classes (e.g., science and computer laboratories, workshops, studios), and for clinical learning (e.g., hospitals, clinics).

Where appropriate, research facilities are included as part of educational resources because a research-active environment improves the quality of higher education. The research culture attracts high calibre academics that engender critical thinking about the “state of the art” and contribute to knowledge advancement. Active researchers are the best to interpret and apply current knowledge for the benefit of academic programmes and the community. Active researchers also attract grants that increase the number of staff and their morale. Interdisciplinary research has positive effects on academic programmes.

A research-active environment provides opportunities for students to observe and participate in research through electives or core courses. Exposure to an environment of curiosity and inquiry encourages students to develop lasting skills in problem-solving, data analysis and continuous updating of knowledge. Some students may develop interest in research.

Educational experts are specialised staff from various disciplines who have been trained or who have considerable experience in effective teaching-learning methodologies and related matters of higher education. They would deal with problems and provide training as well as advice on teaching-learning processes and practices. The expertise can be provided by an education unit or division at the HEP or acquired from an external source.
Other facilities, which are essential for supporting the teaching-learning activities such as hostels, transport, security, recreation and counselling, must be upgraded in parallel with other educational resources. The balanced and proportional increase in the direct and indirect educational resources supports for effective teaching-learning.

The size of collections and amount of money spent on resources and services do not ensure adequacy. Of more importance are the quality, relevance, accessibility, availability and delivery of resources and services, and their actual utilisation by students. These considerations must be taken into account in evaluating the effectiveness of educational resources.

6.1 Physical Facilities

6.1.1 Benchmarked Standards

- Educational resources must be distributed according to the educational needs, which include infrastructure and support for academic staff development programmes.
- The HEP must have sufficient and appropriate physical facilities to ensure effective delivery of the curriculum.
- The physical facilities must correspond with health and safety measures, and comply with the relevant laws.
- There must be adequate and up-to-date reference materials that meet the needs of each programme and research amongst staff and students, and there must be provisions for qualified staff. This must include provisions for appropriate computer and information technology-mediated reference materials.
- Equipments and facilities for training must be adequately provided for HEPs with practical-based programmes.
- The HEP must have a policy regarding the selection and effective use of computers, internal and external networks and other effective means of using information and communication technology in the educational programme. This includes coordination with the library services.

6.1.2 Enhanced Standards

- The students’ learning environment should be regularly improved through renovations, building new facilities as well as acquisition of the latest and appropriate equipment to keep up with the development in educational practices and changes in society.
- The educational resources, services and facilities should be reviewed from time to time to assess the quality and appropriateness for current education and training.
- Students should be provided with opportunities to learn how to access information in different formats.
- The physical facilities should be safe and friendly to those with special needs.
6.2 Research and Development
(For HEPs running degree level programmes and above)

6.2.1 Benchmarked Standards
• The HEP must have a policy that fosters the relationship between research, scholarly activity and education, and describe the research priorities and facilities.
• The interaction between research and education must be reflected in the curriculum, influence current teaching, and encourage and prepare students for engagement in research, scholarship and development.

6.2.2 Enhanced Standards
• The HEP should link research with development and commercialisation.

6.3 Educational Expertise

6.3.1 Benchmarked Standards
• The HEP must have a policy on the use of educational expertise in the planning of educational programmes and in the development of new teaching and assessment methods.

6.3.2 Enhanced Standards
• There should be access to educational experts and the HEP should encourage the use of such expertise for staff development and educational research in the various disciplines.

6.4 Educational Exchanges

6.4.1 Benchmarked Standards
• The HEPs must have a policy of collaboration with other HEPs and for the transfer of credits.

6.4.2 Enhanced Standards
• The HEP should provide appropriate facilities and resources for exchange of academic staff and students.

6.5 Financial Allocation

6.5.1 Benchmarked Standards
• The HEP must have budgetary and procurement policies that demonstrate that its resources are sufficient to achieve its objectives and to maintain high standards of quality.
• The HEP must be given clear line of responsibility and authority for budgeting and resource allocation.

• There must be written policies for the refund of tuition fees and other allowable payments in accordance with the relevant laws.

6.5.2 Enhanced Standards

• Those responsible for the programmes should be given sufficient autonomy to appropriately allocate resources to achieve the programme goals and to maintain high educational standards.

7. PROGRAMME MONITORING AND REVIEW

Programmes are improved by regularly monitoring, reviewing and evaluating institutional structures and processes (administrative structure, leadership and governance, planning and review mechanisms) and specific curriculum components (syllabus, teaching methodologies, general learning outcomes) as well as student progress, employability and student performance in further training.

Feedback needs to be obtained from multiple sources to strengthen their statement of quality in higher education. Evidence is gathered from students, graduates, academic staff and other stakeholders. They can also be obtained from student performance in examinations and from longitudinal study of graduate performance.

Measures of student performance would include the average study duration, assessment scores, passing rate at examinations, success and dropout rates, students’ and graduates’ report about their learning experience, as well as time spent by students on areas of special interest. Evaluation of student performance in examinations can reveal very useful information. If student selection has been correctly done, a high failure rate in a programme indicates something amiss in the curriculum content, teaching-learning activities or assessment system. The programme committees need to monitor the pass rate in each course and investigate if the rate is too high or too low.

Student feedback, for example through questionnaires and representation in programme committees, is useful for identifying specific problems and for continual improvement of the programmes.

One method to evaluate programme effectiveness is a longitudinal study of the graduates. The HEP should have mechanisms for monitoring the performance of its graduates and for obtaining the perceptions of society and employers on the strengths and weaknesses of the graduates and to respond appropriately.
7.1 Mechanisms for Programme Monitoring and Review

7.1.1 Benchmarked Standards

- Various aspects of student performance must be analysed in relation to the mission of the HEP, the curriculum and the learning outcomes.
- There must be systematic, broad based, and appropriate independent programme evaluation, using proper mechanisms and resources, including benchmark data, teaching and learning methods and technologies, as well as the administration and related educational services.
- Teachers and students must be actively involved in the planning of programme evaluation and its results be used for programme improvement.
- There must be provisions for mechanisms and resources to monitor student progress.
- Stakeholder feedback must be reviewed by an appropriate team for further action.

7.1.2 Enhanced Standards

- Student performance and progression should be analysed and utilised to provide feedback to the committees responsible for student selection, curriculum planning and student counselling.
- The HEP internal self-review processes and mechanisms should demonstrate improvement of the programme.

7.2 Involvement of Stakeholders

7.2.1 Benchmarked Standards

- Programme evaluation must involve relevant stakeholders.
- For professional programmes, the professional bodies must be involved in programme evaluation.

7.2.2 Enhanced Standards

- Stakeholders should have access to results of the programme evaluation, and their views on the relevance and development of the curriculum be considered.

8. LEADERSHIP, GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

There are many ways of administering an HEP and the methods of management differ between HEPs. Nevertheless, governance that reflects the leadership of an academic organisation must emphasise excellence and scholarship. It is very crucial that leadership at the various levels of the HEP provides clear guidelines and direction, builds relationship
amongst different categories based on collegiality and transparency and manages finances and other resources with accountability in achieving its mission and goals. Every HEP must have the structure and decision-making processes that emphasise all academic and scholarly activities.

The HEP leadership should forge smart partnerships with significant stakeholders in educational delivery, research and consultancy. Whilst formalised arrangements can protect these relationships, they are best developed by a culture of reciprocity and open communication.

8.1 Governance

8.1.1 Benchmarked Standards

• The official policy and practice of the HEP must be consistent with its statements of purpose.
• The HEP must clarify its governance structures and functions, and the relationships within them, and this must be communicated to all levels of management based on principles of transparency, accountability and authority.
• Evidence must be provided that the board is an active policy-making body for the HEP.

8.1.2 Enhanced Standards

• The HEPs governance principles should describe the committee structure responsible for the educational programmes.
• The governance principles should reflect the representation of academic staff, students and other stakeholders.
• The Chairman of the governing board should exercise non-executive powers of the HEP.
• The governing board should be free from undue external pressures.

8.2 Academic Leadership

8.2.1 Benchmarked Standards

• The criteria for appointment and responsibilities of the academic leadership of the HEP and for the educational programme must be clearly stated and filled by those with the appropriate qualifications and experience.
• The academic leadership of the HEP must have the appropriate authority for curriculum design and delivery.
• Mechanisms and processes must be in place to allow for communication between the programme leadership and the HEP leadership in relation to matters such as resources allocation.
8.2.2 Enhanced Standards
• The academic leadership should be evaluated at defined intervals with respect to the performance of the programme in the achievement of the mission and goals of the HEP.

8.3 Administrative Staff and Management

8.3.1 Benchmarked Standards
• The administrative staff of the HEP must be appropriate and sufficient to support the implementation of the educational programmes and other activities and to ensure good management and deployment of the resources.

8.3.2 Enhanced Standards
• The HEP should conduct regular quality assurance review.
• The HEP should have a comprehensive risk management programme.

8.4 Academic Records

8.4.1 Benchmarked Standards
• The HEP must have policies concerning the nature and security of student and academic staff records.
• The HEP must establish and disseminate policies that respect the rights of individual privacy and the confidentiality of records.

8.4.2 Enhanced Standards
• The HEP should continuously review policies on security of records including increased use of electronic technologies and its safety systems.

8.5 Interaction with External Sectors

8.5.1 Benchmarked Standards
• The HEP must have a constructive and proactive mechanism for cooperation with external stakeholders.

8.5.2 Enhanced Standards
• The collaboration with external sectors should be formalised through agreements and followed by actions.
9. TOTAL CONTINUAL QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

Society demands increasing accountability from HEPs. Needs are constantly changing because of the explosive growth in global knowledge and advancements in science, technology as well as education that are rapidly disseminated. In facing these challenges, HEPs as dynamic learning organisations need to continually and systematically review and monitor the various issues so as to meet the needs of the constantly changing environment.

9.1 Quality Improvement

9.1.1 Benchmarked Standards

• The HEP must establish dynamic policies, procedures and mechanisms for regular reviewing and updating of its structure, functions, strategies and core activities to assure quality.
• The HEP must provide evidence of the review system, the result of the conducted review, the steps undertaken to implement the changes and evidence of achievement.
• There must be a relation of quality assurance with the achievement of the key performance indicators.

9.1.2 Enhanced Standards

• Continual improvement should be based on prospective studies and analyses and should lead to the revisions of the policies and practices of the HEP in accordance to past experience, present activities and future perspectives.
Section 3  The Internal Quality Audit

INTRODUCTION

An internal quality audit is also known as a self-review. It is conducted by the higher education provider (HEP) and is an important part of the quality assurance process. The Chief Executive Officer and other senior staff must be totally committed to and supportive of the self-review and its purposes. A senior person with appropriate expertise should lead the self-review process supported by the HEP’s quality committee. The self-review builds as much as possible on current relevant evaluative activity and relevant existing materials.

The HEP brings together representatives of the administration, the academic staff, students and other constituents to:

• collect and review data on the HEP and its educational programmes;
• analyse the data to identify the institutional strengths, areas of concern and opportunities;
• develop strategies to ensure that the strengths are maintained and problems are addressed; and
• make specific recommendations for further quality enhancement.

An internal quality audit is concerned with the HEP’s own objectives, and with the success of the HEP in achieving those objectives based on the guidelines on good practices and the general requirements in the nine areas of quality assurance in the structure and process of higher education which are:

1. Vision, Mission, Educational Goals and Learning Outcomes;
2. Curriculum Design and Delivery;
3. Assessment of Students;
4. Student Selection and Support Services;
5. Academic Staff;
6. Educational Resources;
7. Programme Monitoring and Review;
8. Leadership, Governance and Administration; and

Specific self-questioning around each area might be structured as follows:

• What actions are we taking in relation to this area?
• Why were these actions chosen?
• How do we check their effectiveness – what performance indicators do we have?
• Are the indicators effective?
• What do we do as a result of the review?
• Can we measure the degree of achievements – what are the actual outcomes?
• Can we improve on the existing actions, even those that are already effective?
An internal quality audit has several merits including:

- the recognition of institutional autonomy and responsibility;
- the maintenance of a process of critical self-development; and
- the production of information, and reflection on it, some of which is not normally evident.

For effective quality management, it is implicit that the HEP’s policy or procedure should be in writing, approved through appropriate institutional processes, published in appropriate institutional documents accessible to those affected by the policy or procedure, and implemented by the HEP.

3.1 The Internal Quality Audit Task Force

An internal quality audit requires time and effort. A self-review task force is formed and a coordinator is appointed. Members of the task force should include people who are able to make an objective assessment and could give useful information on the HEP which may include administrators (academic, fiscal, managerial), heads of departments and programmes, junior and senior academics, students and alumni, and others associated with the HEP as well as those external to the HEP.

For each section of the self-review report, it is recommended that a person most familiar with the relevant process is appointed as the head of the section. The coordinator is responsible for distributing and collecting the institutional database forms, answering questions during database preparation, preparing the final unified version of the database, coordinating the self analysis report and writing the final consolidated self-review report.

The students are expected to participate actively in the self-review process and are encouraged to produce an independent student report.

3.2 Data Collection

Data should be accurately and consistently collated by a knowledgeable person in the HEP for each particular section. Wherever possible, references should be made to documents that are already published.

The HEP should provide a factual description of its history, policies, procedures and structures to support the education, training and research activities, and not just provide brief answers to the specific questions listed under each heading. Information on the processes by which decisions are made and its rationale should also be included.

An institutional self-review should be built on the HEP’s existing quality improvement programme. It should incorporate information and conclusions obtained from a variety of sources.
3.3 The Self-Review Portfolio (SRP)

The self-review can be expressed in terms of asking questions about processes and their consequences, as well as about structures and their effects. The HEP self-review could generate an effective critique, which is both objective and effective for self-development.

The HEP is encouraged to undertake an analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities that are appropriate and to assess itself against the quality assurance standards. An internal quality audit is concerned with the HEP’s own goals and with the success of the HEP in achieving those goals. The internal quality audit must be widely understood and owned so that the results and implications of the review and the resulting audit processes are followed through.

The head of every section forwards his report of the analysis to the coordinator of the task force. The coordinator synthesises the findings and analysis of each section of the quality assurance areas into a Self-Review Portfolio (SRP).

3.3.1 Guidelines for the Self-Review Portfolio

The HEP should follow closely the following requirements and may need to clarify with the MQA from time to time about the details regarding the submission.

- The Documentation Required
  HEPs are required to submit the SRP (MQA-03), for an institutional audit in the prescribed format below:
  - Part A: General Information on the HEP
  - Part B: Information on the Nine Areas of Evaluation for Quality Assurance
  - Part C: Self-Review Report

  For the information requested in Part B, the HEP may use the template provided in this section or provide the information in a different format using Part B as a check-list. The HEP may want to refer to Appendix 4 of this document.

  In preparing the portfolio, HEPs are encouraged to use bullet points, diagrams and flow charts as much as possible. In support of the information provided in the portfolio, HEPs may append relevant and significant documentations. The HEP may be requested to provide additional information before or during the institutional audit visit. Further, the HEP may also be required to allow the auditors access to confidential information for verification purposes.

- Submission requirements
  The HEP is expected to send to the MQA:
  - Hard copies of the SRP as per required.
  - Hard copies of other supporting materials as per required.
  - A soft copy of the SRP.

  Upon receipt of the SRP, the MQA will vet through the document to ensure that the submission is complete. In cases where the SRP is incomplete, the MQA will request the HEP to complete the documentation. The SRP is then forwarded to the panel of auditors.
PART A - GENERAL INFORMATION ON THE HIGHER EDUCATION PROVIDER

1. Name of the higher education provider (HEP):

2. Date of establishment:

3. Reference No. of the Approval for Establishment:

4. Name, title and designation of the chief executive officer:

5. Address:
   - Address:
   - Correspondence (if different from above):

6. Tel.:

7. Fax.:

8. Email:

9. Website:

10. Names and addresses of Faculties/Schools/Departments/Centres (if located outside the main campus):

   i.
   ii.
   iii.

11. Names and addresses of branch campuses (if applicable):

   i.
   ii.
   iii.

12. List of Faculties/Schools/Departments/Centres in the HEP (and its branch campuses) and no. of programmes offered:

<table>
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<th>No.</th>
<th>Name of Faculties/Schools/Departments/Centres</th>
<th>No. of programmes offered</th>
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13. Details of all programmes currently conducted by the HEP (and its branch campuses):

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<th>No.</th>
<th>Name of programme</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Awarding body</th>
<th>Approval Date</th>
<th>Accreditation Date</th>
<th>Recognition (by PSD/JPA) Date</th>
<th>Mode of Delivery</th>
<th>No. of students</th>
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14. Total number of academic staff:

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15. Total number of students:

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16. Total number of administrative and support staff:

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17. State the purpose of this audit:

- [ ] Comprehensive Institutional audit
- [ ] Thematic audit …………………………………..(please specify)

18. Provide details of the purpose of this audit:

19. Provide the organisational chart of the HEP:

20. Contact person:
- Name (Title):
- Designation:
- Tel.:
- Fax.:
- Email:
PART B - INFORMATION ON THE NINE AREAS OF EVALUATION FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE

The statements below are meant to be guidelines for data collection in the nine areas of quality assurance.

1. VISION, MISSION, EDUCATIONAL GOALS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES
   1.1 Statements of Vision, Mission and Educational Goals
      1.1.1 Describe or provide a copy of the HEP’s vision and mission and the general educational goals.
      1.1.2 Describe how they are made known to the relevant parties.
      1.1.3 Specify how social responsibility, research attainment, community involvement, ethical values, and leadership are reflected in the educational goals.
      1.1.4 Provide references to other published vision, mission and goals statements that refer to these areas.

   1.2 Participation in Formulation of Vision, Mission and Educational Goals
      1.2.1 State the HEP’s principal stakeholders.
      1.2.2 Describe how the HEP involves major stakeholders in the formulation and renewal of the mission and educational goals as well as the educational programmes.
      1.2.3 List other stakeholders that the HEP consults.
      1.2.4 Describe how the HEP consults and involves these groups in ongoing refinement to the vision, mission and goals statements.

   1.3 Academic Autonomy
      1.3.1 Describe policies that determine responsibility for the curriculum and allocation of resources. Provide supporting documents where appropriate.
      1.3.2 Give details of HEP policies and practices that show the teaching and learning are consistent with the curriculum. How is it redressed if there are elements of inconsistencies?
      1.3.3 Specify the HEP’s process for reviewing resource allocation.
      1.3.4 State the policies to address conflict of interest, for example, staff involvement in private practice.

   1.4 Learning Outcomes
      1.4.1 Specify the broad competencies and attributes expected of students upon completion of a period of study.
      1.4.2 Describe how these relate to the existing and emergent needs of the profession and discipline.
2. CURRICULUM DESIGN AND DELIVERY

2.1 Curriculum Design and Teaching-Learning Methods

2.1.1 Elaborate how the HEP ensures the principles guiding the design of the curriculum support the attainment of the programmes outcomes.

2.1.2 Describe how the HEP ensures its curriculum and instructional methods encourage students to take active participation for their learning.

2.1.3 Specify how the HEP envisages that the curriculum and instructional methods prepare students for lifelong learning.

2.1.4 Describe how and where students acquire knowledge, mastery of skills, and develop attitudes and behaviour in preparation for their learning, individual growth, future work and responsible citizenry (e.g., co-curriculum).

2.2 Curriculum Content and Structure

2.2.1 Describe the processes in which the HEP adapts the contribution of various disciplines to meet the recent development in knowledge, technology and the needs of the country.

2.2.2 Specify the process by which multidisciplinary topics of local, national and international importance are incorporated into the curriculum.

2.2.3 Describe how the curriculum enriches the learner's practical, intellectual and related soft skills.

2.2.4 Describe how the curriculum fosters positive attitudes, personal development and responsibility, ethical values and good citizenship.

2.3 Management of Programmes

2.3.1 State the terms of reference of the curriculum committees.

2.3.2 What authority do the committees have to resolve conflicts of educational principle and to determine the contributions of specific disciplines to the programmes?

2.3.3 Describe how the committees ensure that the programmes are implemented according to goals.

2.3.4 Describe how supervision is instituted. Explain how the HEP deals with situations where it anticipates a student encountering academic difficulty (e.g., a student entering with a marginal academic record).

2.3.5 Indicate the cause of any discordance, for example, factors hindering more successful organisation of programme and resources, changing objectives, needed redirection or reallocation of resources.

2.3.6 Explain the HEP's mechanisms and resources for introducing innovations in teaching-learning and evaluation methods.

2.4 Linkages with External Stakeholders

2.4.1 Describe the links that exist between the HEP and its stakeholders.
2.4.2 Specify how the curriculum committees obtain the participation of employers, community and society in getting feedback about graduate performance.

2.4.3 Indicate what mechanisms exist to make use of feedback to improve the curriculum.

2.5 Articulation Regulations, and Credit Transfer and Exemption

2.5.1 Describe the policies, regulations and processes of articulation, credit transfer and exemption.

3. ASSESSMENT OF STUDENTS

3.1 Relationship Between Assessment and Learning

3.1.1 Explain how the HEP ensures its assessment practices are made compatible with educational goals and learning methods.

3.1.2 Indicate how the HEP monitors student assessment to reduce curriculum overload and encourage integrated learning.

3.1.3 Specify the extent to which integrated assessment of various curricula elements are obtained.

3.1.4 Describe how the HEP ensures that appropriate attitudes are assessed and inculcated (e.g., respect for socio-cultural differences, sensitivity to rights of others, cost effectiveness, teamwork, lifelong learning).

3.2 Assessment Methods

3.2.1 Provide information on the general assessment policy. Provide documents given to students that specify timing, methods, weighting and criteria for progression and graduation, as well as the due process, policies and procedures for dealing with an adverse academic action involving a student.

3.2.2 State the authority responsible for assessment policy. Describe the composition of the committees involved and their terms of reference.

3.2.3 Explain how the relevant committee determines whether students have attained the HEP's standards of achievement and have met national and international standards of performance?

3.2.4 Explain how the committee ensures that standards are met.

3.2.5 Explain the process where students are evaluated and given formal feedback during the course in time for remediation, if necessary.

3.2.6 Describe how the HEP ensures that such evaluation and feedback occur.

3.2.7 Describe any review courses, training or institutional-directed reparatory sessions organised for remediation.

3.2.8 Explain whether records are available to students for feedback on performance and corrective measures.

3.2.9 Indicate whether records of evaluation are available for review by students.
3.2.10 Specify whether students have the right to appeal. Provide information on the appeal policy.

3.2.11 Explain how the HEP monitors the reliability and validity of assessment over time and across sites.

3.2.12 Describe how internal assessments are validated against external standards (e.g., external examiners, external examinations).

3.3 Management of Student Assessment

3.3.1 Describe how confidentiality and security are ensured in student assessment processes and in academic records.

3.3.2 Describe the mechanism to ensure validity, reliability and fairness of the examination system.

3.3.3 State whether the curriculum have mechanisms to review and implement new methods of assessment.

3.3.4 State whether student representatives, academic staff and stakeholders are involved in improving the system of student assessment and their mode of involvement.

4. STUDENT SELECTION AND SUPPORT SERVICES

4.1 Admission and Selection

4.1.1 Describe the academic criteria for admission and how they are disseminated.

4.1.2 State whether there are additional requirements at the national level.

4.1.3 State who is responsible for selection policy and explain the methods used.

4.1.4 Provide a copy of any technical standards that have been deployed for the admission of students with special needs.

4.1.5 Describe how the size of student intake is determined in relation to the capacity of the HEP and explain the mechanisms that exist for adjustments.

4.1.6 Describe the appeal mechanism.

4.1.7 Describe how the selection methods are evaluated to comply with the social responsibilities, human resource requirements and needs for further studies and lifelong learning.

4.1.8 Explain how the selection committee evaluates its admission policies.

4.1.9 State whether special programmes are provided for those who are selected but do not meet the competency level.

4.1.10 State whom the HEP consulted concerning changes in the size and composition of the student intake.
4.2 Transfer of Students
4.2.1 Describe the mechanism that the HEP has to ensure transfer students are given exemptions by taking into account their previous experience, qualifications obtained from another programme and credits accumulated.
4.2.2 Indicate how students accepted for transfer demonstrate comparable achievements in their previous institution of study. Provide the relevant data to support this.
4.2.3 State the arrangements made by the HEP to regulate students who wish to transfer to another programme.

4.3 Student Support Services and Co-Curricular Activities
4.3.1 Describe the accessibility, confidentiality and effectiveness of the counselling and support services (e.g., preventive and therapeutic health services, health insurance, financial aid, sports, cultural activities) available to the students.
4.3.2 Explain how the HEP ensures those who provide these services are qualified.
4.3.3 Describe additional support programmes provided by other organisations that the students could access.
4.3.4 Describe the accessibility and effectiveness of the career counselling service.
4.3.5 Describe mechanisms that exist to identify students who are in need of spiritual, psychological, social and academic support.

4.4 Student Representation
4.4.1 State the HEP's policy on student participation in the teaching-learning process. Describe how students contribute to the development of these policies.
4.4.2 Explain the measures taken by HEP to encourage student self-government and participation in the activities of the governing bodies of the HEP.

4.5 Alumni
4.5.1 Describe the role of the alumni in curriculum development, the achievement of the learning outcomes and the future direction of the HEP.

5. ACADEMIC STAFF
5.1 Recruitment and Management
5.1.1 Provide policies on staff recruitment to include the requirements related to the qualifications for appointment, and any government policies or other requirements that affect the HEP's staffing decisions.
5.1.2 Indicate how frequent the HEP reviews its recruitment policy.
5.1.3 Provide data to show that the staffing profile matches the range and balance of teaching skills, specialisations and qualifications required to deliver the programme. Identify any problem areas and describe corrective actions needed and planned.
5.1.4 Describe how the HEP improves its recruitment of staff to meet its goals.
5.1.5 Explain how this improvement influences the emphasis on academic qualifications, professional experience, research and teaching productivity, and peer recognition.

5.2 Service and Development

5.2.1 Describe the HEP's criteria and administrative procedures for initial appointment, promotion and tenure. Provide written guidelines. If there are multiple tracks for academic staff, describe these and the criteria for advancement.

5.2.2 Explain how the teacher-student ratios, relevant to the various educational components are taken into account in the staff policy.

5.2.3 Provide staff appraisal policy.

5.2.4 Describe the teaching responsibility of the academic staff and the workload distribution.

5.2.5 State the HEP's policy for ensuring that teaching, research and service contributions are appropriately recognised and rewarded.

5.2.6 Indicate whether a policy on consultancy and private practice exists.

5.2.7 Describe the continuing professional development programmes organised for the staff.

5.2.8 Describe the mentoring system for staff.

5.2.9 Describe how participation in staff development programmes is encouraged.

5.2.10 Describe how participation of staff in relevant bodies is ensured.

5.2.11 Describe briefly the major community service activities of the staff members. Evaluate the extent to which the activities are considered in appointments and promotions.

5.2.12 Give evidence of national and international recognition of staff members (e.g., journal editorship, service as peer reviewers, study and expert-groups and national committee membership).

6. EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

6.1 Physical Facilities

6.1.1 Evaluate the adequacy of the physical facilities and equipments as well as human resources such as workshop, studio or laboratory professionals. Identify current unmet needs and needs that may arise within the next several years.

6.1.2 For programmes requiring workshop or laboratory support, provide a brief description of the facilities.
6.1.3 Demonstrate arrangement procedures that meet the programmes specific requirements in practical and industrial training.

6.1.4 Show the staff strength and adequacy of staffing and describe the nature of any additional resources needed.

6.1.5 Describe resource sharing and access mechanisms that are available to extend the library's capabilities. Comment on the extent of use of these facilities by academic staff and students. Comment on the adequacy of the library to support the programmes.

6.1.6 Describe the amenities for students.

6.1.7 Explain how the HEP reviews the adequacy of the educational resources.

6.1.8 Indicate what plans exist to improve these facilities in line with the development in the teaching practice.

6.2 Research and Development
(For HEPs running degree level programmes and above)

6.2.1 Provide a brief description of the research facilities and major research programmes of the HEP.

6.2.2 Describe any programmes on ethics in research for staff and graduate students.

6.2.3 Describe the formal policy related to scientific misconduct in research (e.g., deception, fabrication of results, plagiarism, and conduct outside the norm of scientific behaviour) and how it is disseminated.

6.2.4 Specify administrative entity that is responsible for protecting the integrity of the research processes.

6.2.5 Summarise the major scholarly and research interests at the HEP. Evaluate the extent and quality of the research effort.

6.2.6 Describe how the HEP fosters interaction between its research and educational activities.

6.2.7 Explain the mechanism that exists to ensure research activities are reflected in the curriculum and teaching.

6.2.8 State any initiatives taken by the HEP to engage students in research, indicating the timing, auspices and funding.

6.3 Educational Expertise

6.3.1 Describe the HEP's policy that ensures educational expertise and methodologies are appropriate for the delivery of the curriculum.

6.3.2 Describe the access to external educational expertise.

6.4 Educational Exchanges

6.4.1 Describe the policy that the HEP has for collaborating with other providers.
6.4.2 Provide a summary of the existing collaborative links with other HEPs and describe the nature of those links, student exchanges, staff exchanges, and research.

6.4.3 Explain the HEP’s policy and practice on the transfer of credits.

6.4.4 Describe any activity directed towards national, regional and international co-operation with other HEPs.

6.4.5 Indicate the authority that the HEP has to direct resources to regional and international cooperation.

6.5 Financial Allocation

6.5.1 Provide information on the HEP’s financial standing which supports its academic, research and service missions.

6.5.2 Explain how financial aid is determined.

6.5.3 Describe the policy for refund of tuition payments to students who withdraw or are dismissed from enrolment. Explain the system for counselling students on financial aid and debt management.

6.5.4 Indicate the magnitude of students requesting loans and grants or scholarship.

7. PROGRAMME MONITORING AND REVIEW

7.1 Mechanisms for Programme Monitoring and Review

7.1.1 Explain how the HEP evaluates its programmes.

7.1.2 Describe how the HEP monitors performance and outcome data.

7.1.3 Explain how the HEP ensures that identified concerns are addressed.

7.1.4 List the outcome indicators used by the curriculum committees to evaluate the programme effectiveness. For each indicator, briefly describe what is done and how the information about performance is used for curriculum evaluation and change.

7.1.5 Describe how evaluation activities are being enhanced and refined to cover all important components of the programmes.

7.1.6 Explain how the HEP measures and obtains information on the competencies of its graduates.

7.1.7 Describe how the HEP uses the feedback from programme review in programme development.

7.1.7.1 Teachers and Students Feedback

- Describe how the HEP samples, analyses and uses the opinion of staff and students on its programmes, and utilise the information.

- Indicate how the HEP encourages individual staff and students to participate in its evaluation activities and in subsequent programme development.

- Provide any data of the most recent graduates pursuing further studies and engaging in full-time jobs.
7.1.7.2 Student Performance

- Show the type of statistical data on student performance that are collected and analysed, and how they are used in relation to the curriculum, educational goals and mission of the HEP.
- Provide data to show student performance and progression.
- Explain the reasons for students leaving the programmes.
- Describe the parameters that are monitored in relation to student performance and how this is fed back into student selection, curriculum planning and student support services.

7.2 Involvement of Stakeholders

7.2.1 Describe how the HEP ensures that principal stakeholders are involved in programme evaluation.
7.2.2 Explain how the HEP ensures that outcomes of programme evaluations are communicated to the stakeholders.
7.2.3 Describe the extent of stakeholders’ involvement in the evaluation and development of the programme.
7.2.4 Explain the mechanism (formal and informal) utilised by the HEP to ensure that stakeholders’ views are taken into consideration.

8. LEADERSHIP, GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

8.1 Governance

8.1.1 Describe the functions, structure, leadership, membership and reporting protocol of the major permanent decision-making bodies.
8.1.2 Indicate the type and frequency of meetings held during the past academic year.
8.1.3 Describe how the HEP ensures the effectiveness of relationships between the institutional leadership and the faculties.
8.1.4 Describe the representation and role of academic staff, students and other stakeholders in the various governance structures and committees.

8.2 Academic Leadership

8.2.1 Explain the selection process and criteria of academic leadership and the officials they report to.
8.2.2 Explain the academic management structure indicating the line of responsibility for individual areas.
8.2.3 Describe the performance of the academic leadership and scholarship in the HEP's appraised performance in relation to the mission and goals.

8.3 Administrative Staff and Management

8.3.1 Describe the effectiveness and efficiency of the administrative support.
8.3.2 Describe the effectiveness and efficiency of the quality assurance arrangements for the administrative and management components.
8.4 Academic Records
8.4.1 State the policies on the secure retention and disposal of student records.

8.5 Interaction with External Sectors
8.5.1 Describe formal mechanisms to ensure that the HEP interacts constructively with the external sectors.
8.5.2 Describe the effectiveness of the relationships between the HEP and the external sectors.
8.5.3 Describe any type of shared responsibility between the HEP and the external sectors.

9. TOTAL CONTINUAL QUALITY IMPROVEMENT
9.1 Quality Improvement
9.1.1 Identify those responsible for total quality improvement within the HEP.
9.1.2 Provide the policies, strategies, plans, procedures and mechanisms the HEP uses to regularly review and update its mission, structures and activities.
9.1.3 Explain the frequency of reviews undertaken and the resulting improvements.
9.1.4 Describe the recent and projected activities undertaken with the purpose to ensure that the HEP remains responsive to its changing environment.

PART C – SELF-REVIEW REPORT
The self-review report should include the following:
• Strengths of the HEP in meeting its goals;
• Areas of concern that need to be addressed;
• Strategies for maintaining and enhancing the strengths;
• Steps that have been taken to address the problem areas; and
• Conclusions and recommendations for change.
The institutional audit is an external independent audit. There is no single authoritative interpretation of the concept of institutional effectiveness. However, the Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA) does expect each higher education provider (HEP) to develop a broad-based system to determine institutional effectiveness appropriate to its own context and purpose, to use the purpose statement as the foundation of planning and evaluation, to employ a variety of assessment methods, and to demonstrate use of the results of the planning and evaluation process for the improvement of both educational programmes and support activities. Educational quality will be judged finally by how effectively the HEP achieves its established goals.

4.1 The Role Players

4.1.1 The Liaison Officer
Each HEP should appoint a liaison officer to act as the key link between the HEP and the MQA to coordinate the institutional audit. The MQA should be informed of the name of the officer, whom it will contact on the plans and arrangements for the institutional audit.

The liaison can arrange the tentative agenda for the visit and after mutual agreement with the MQA Institutional Audit Team, will inform all the relevant people of the audit schedule.

The HEP will provide a base room and meeting rooms for the institutional audit team. The base room serves as the audit team’s office and should be provided with a computer and printer. This is where the audit team will work, share evidence, check judgments, read documentary evidence and draft reports. It is an important place for the team to share ideas and to analyse findings. Access to the base room should be restricted because of the confidential nature of the information and discussion. The base room is also the place where the audit team normally gathers for the initial team meeting and daily team meetings.

During the Planning Visit, the Chairperson and the MQA secretariat should be able to inspect the base room to ensure its suitability. All forms of information in the base room should be accessible to the audit team.

Individual meetings with members of the HEP may take place in the base room but generally it is better if meetings can be held in separate meeting rooms.

The liaison officer may be requested to join the panel of auditors meeting should there be a need for clarification of issues.

4.1.2 Representatives of the HEP (Auditees)
The panel of auditors normally meets with various groups of people in the HEP to secure and verify information from more than one source. The HEP will be advised as to the
groups of people the panel will interview after the panel’s reading and discussion of the Self-Review Portfolio (SRP). The panel of auditors may request to meet the following people or categories of people:

- The Chief Executive Officer, both alone and with the senior management group. The first and the last formal meetings are with the Chief Executive Officer and others at his invitation;
- Members of key committees who are responsible for the development and supervision of policy on quality assurance in the audit main areas;
- Key persons in the HEP responsible for the management and operation of the quality systems and subsystems, such as deans, heads of departments and quality manager;
- Members of the governing board or equivalent;
- Student representatives;
- Staff and students in selected departments, programmes or areas;
- A cross-section of students drawn from different levels and categories;
- A selection of graduates; and
- Senior managers from industry, commerce and government, with experience of the HEP and its graduates.

Student representatives should be selected and briefed on their role so that they may truthfully provide representative student input. Student opinion will be sought regarding the quality and adequacy of the programmes, academic, counselling, health service, financial aid and the student’s role in providing feedback to HEP’s policy and services. Students may be selected to serve as guides in the visits to the library, classroom, laboratories and other teaching-learning facilities.

Representatives of the academic staff should be briefed on their roles so that they may truly provide representative input. Staff opinion will be sought regarding staff development, promotion and tenure, teaching skills, understanding of institutional goals, role in institutional governance, perceptions of the curriculum, students, the culture in the HEP and appropriateness of facilities.

4.1.3 The Chairperson
A Chairperson will be appointed by the MQA and will be responsible for the overall conduct of the institutional audit. Further details on the roles and responsibilities of the Chairperson are given in Section 5 “The Panel of Auditors”.

4.1.4 The Panel Secretary
Further details on the roles and responsibilities of the Secretary are given in Section 5.

4.1.5 The Panel Members
Further details on the roles and responsibilities of the Panel members are given in Section 5.
4.2 The Audit Timeline

The Audit Timeline is a scheduled outline normally used for the conduct of an Audit Visit. It is usual for the time of the audit to be determined together by the HEP and the MQA secretariat. The schedule is set out in the tables in three segments - as weeks before the Audit Visit, the week of the Audit Visit, and weeks after the Audit Visit.

The Weeks Before the Audit Visit

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<td><strong>Audit Management Meeting (refer to section 4.3)</strong>&lt;br&gt;To agree upon:&lt;br&gt;- the purpose of the audit&lt;br&gt;- the scope of the audit&lt;br&gt;- the audit timeline</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>MQA submits the list of proposed auditors (with biodata) to the HEP</td>
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<td>HEP sends response to MQA on the list of proposed auditors</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>MQA confirms:&lt;br&gt;- the appointment of members of the panel of auditors and Chairperson&lt;br&gt;- the dates of the Preliminary Meeting&lt;br&gt;- Planning Visit and Audit Visit</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>• HEP submits Self-Review Portfolio to MQA&lt;br&gt;• MQA sends portfolio to panel of auditors</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>• MQA makes travel arrangements for the Preliminary Meeting of the panel of auditors (week 7)&lt;br&gt;• MQA makes travel arrangements for the Audit Visit (week 0)</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>• Auditors submit their individual written report to MQA&lt;br&gt;• MQA circulates reports to all panel members</td>
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| 7            | Preliminary Meeting (refer to section 4.4)  
- Panel of auditors appoints Secretary  
- Panel identifies main issues for audit and further documentation required  
- Panel Secretary drafts audit timetable for the visit |
| 6            | MQA :  
- collates panel comments and requests for additional information  
- sends requests to the HEP  
- sends audit timetable to the HEP  
- makes travel arrangements for the Planning Visit |
| 5            |                                      |
| 4            | Planning Visit to the HEP by Chairperson and MQA Secretariat  
- HEP provides additional information requested  
- Chairperson and MQA secretariat visit the HEP for discussion and inspection, and confirm audit timetable with the HEP |
| 3            | MQA sends additional documentation received to auditors  
MQA sends audit timetable to the HEP and auditors |
| 2            |                                      |
| 1            |                                      |

**Week of the Audit Visit (refer to Section 4.6 “The Timetable for Audit Visit”)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Audit Visit Week</th>
<th>Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
|                  | • Panel of Auditors meetings  
|                  | • Documentation check  
|                  | • Interviews  
|                  | • Oral exit report to senior management |
The Weeks After the Audit Visit

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weeks After</th>
<th>Activities and Responsibilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Secretary drafts a report and sends Draft Report to panel members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Panel members send comments on the Revised Draft Report to Secretary</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 4           | • Secretary revises the text and sends Revised Draft Report to MQA  
              • MQA sends Revised Draft Report to the HEP to check facts |
| 5           |                                   |
| 6           | HEP sends response on Revised Draft Report to MQA |
| 7           | MQA checks with Chairperson and Secretary on HEP's comments |
| 8-9         | Chairperson finalises Report and submit it to MQA |
| 10-12       | • Presentation of the Report to Institutional Audit Committee for deliberation  
              • Institutional Audit Committee approves Final Report  
              • MQA submits report to relevant parties |
| 15          | MQA Releases Summary of the Report. |

4.3 The Audit Management Meeting

The Audit Management Meeting is the first formal engagement between the HEP and the MQA. In this meeting, representatives from the HEP involved with quality assurance will discuss and confirm with the MQA on the purpose, scope and timeline of the audit.
4.4 The Preliminary Meeting

After the SRP has been submitted, there will be a Preliminary Meeting of the panel of auditors. In this meeting, panel of auditors will:

- appoint the Secretary;
- determine the main issues for audit;
- review audit procedures;
- share their first impression of the portfolio;
- identify any further information, clarification or documentation required from the HEP; and
- draft a timetable for the audit.

Following the Preliminary Meeting, the MQA will advise the HEP if there is any further information, clarification or documentation required from the HEP.

4.5 The Planning Visit

About three weeks after the Preliminary Meeting, the Chairperson and the MQA secretariat will make a Planning Visit to the HEP. The main concerns are to:

- clarify the roles and responsibilities of various parties involved in the audit process;
- discuss the practical implications for the HEP in providing further information to the panel of auditors (via the MQA);
- clarify issues through conversation where possible;
- indicate to the HEP which persons the panel regards as best able to assist it in verifying particular issues;
- advise the HEP which sample of departments, areas or systems are to be studied;
- confirm the timetable of the audit, including site visits and persons to meet;
- discuss with the HEP the logistics associated with the audit and any matters relating to the HEP’s responsibilities to ensure that the relevant information and the relevant parties are available to be interviewed during the audit; and
- inspect the suitability of the base room.

The audit team's requirements will be made clear to the HEP during the Planning Visit. The Audit Visit timetable ought to be designed with sufficient flexibility to give the HEP time to provide further information or for the panel to set up further interviews or re-interviews with specific people, should the need for these emerge during the visit.

The MQA will decide the mode and nature of visits to HEPs that have multi-campuses and offshore campuses or that operate transnational programmes.
4.6 The Timetable for the Audit Visit

The design of the actual timetable for the audit visit will depend on the purpose and focus of the audit.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Day 1</td>
<td>Afternoon</td>
<td>- Check-in at the hotel</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Evening</td>
<td>- Panel coordination meeting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day 2</td>
<td>Morning</td>
<td>- Panel meeting and interviews</td>
<td>Panel coordination meeting is a meeting among the panel members only. Panel convenes to review documents and agree to the audit processes and strategies, and prepare for interviews.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lunch</td>
<td>- Group meetings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Afternoon</td>
<td>- Panel coordination meeting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Site visit</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Evening</td>
<td>- Panel reviews the day</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day 3</td>
<td>Morning</td>
<td>- Panel meeting and interviews</td>
<td>Group meetings will be held during lunch with each auditor talking to a small group of people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lunch</td>
<td>- Group meetings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Afternoon</td>
<td>- Documentation check</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Evening</td>
<td>- Panel reviews the day</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day 4</td>
<td>Morning</td>
<td>- Re-interviews</td>
<td>Site visits are visits to facilities and relevant departments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Panel Review meeting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Exit meeting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Afternoon</td>
<td>- Panel coordination meeting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Evening</td>
<td>- Report writing</td>
<td>A documentation check refers to panel members scrutinising records and documents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day 5</td>
<td>Morning</td>
<td>- Report writing</td>
<td>Panel Review Meeting is where the panel reviews and determines main findings before reporting to the HEP at the end of the morning session.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Afternoon</td>
<td>- Check-out</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Shaded rows indicate activities carried out at the HEP.
4.7 The Audit Visit

The principal purpose of the Audit Visit is to verify the content of the HEP’s Self-Review Portfolio. The visit is also meant to acquire further insight into the HEP’s operations through first-hand observation and personal interaction. A visit allows a qualitative assessment of factors that may not be easily documented in written form.

The visit may begin with a social gathering and may involve the members of the HEP who will be interviewed during the Audit Visit. The purpose of the gathering is to introduce the auditors as individual people and fellow professionals.

The panel conducts interviews to gain clarification on issues to assist the panel in its review of the effectiveness of systems for monitoring and enhancing the quality of the HEP being audited, and of the effectiveness of the application of the systems that are appropriate for achieving the HEP’s stated aims and objectives. The panel of auditors reaches its conclusions through the interviews and documentation checks carried out during the visit and their individual reflections on them. Further site visits may take place from time to time.

After the interviews are concluded, the panel meets to formalise its preliminary findings which are then reported orally to the HEP.

4.8 The Oral Exit Report

At the end of the visit, the Chairperson, representing the panel, delivers an oral report to the HEP. The oral report will highlight the areas of strengths, the opportunities and the areas of concern. The areas of concern are directly related to non-compliance to the standards and the opportunities highlights room for improvement and future possibilities. All key elements must be covered at the oral exit report so that the written report is consistent with the oral report.

The Chairperson provides opportunities for the members of the HEP to seek clarifications and explanations to the points raised in the oral report. He should advise the members of the HEP that the findings given in the oral report are tentative and will be presented in a more detailed written Institutional Audit Report.

4.9 The Draft Report

The Chairperson and the Secretary are responsible for drafting the Report, in consultation with panel members, to ensure that it represents the consensus view of the panel members.

Approximately a month after the Audit Visit, the MQA sends the HEP a copy of the Revised Draft Report for verification of facts and feedback.
4.10 The Audit Report

The aim of the institutional audit is to produce an Audit Report that is of assistance to the HEP in continual quality improvement. The panel comes to its conclusions and recommendations through observed facts and through its interpretation of the specific evidence received from the HEP or that it has gathered itself.

4.11 Findings and Judgment

Depending on the type of the audit undertaken, the panel may propose one or more of the following:

4.11.1 For Continuation or Cessation of Programme Accreditation
i. The institutional audit report shall focus on Commendations and Affirmations, i.e., on aspects of the provision of the programmes that are considered worthy of praise and proposed improvements by the HEP to aspects of the programmes which the panel believes significant and welcomes.
ii. Recommendation to maintain or cease an Accreditation status of a programme shall be forwarded to the Accreditation Committee for its decision. The decision will be reported to the Qualifications Reference Division to be affected on the Malaysian Qualifications Register (MQR). A publicly accessible summary report is then released, usually within four weeks after the final version has been sent to the HEP.

4.11.2 For Academic Performance Audit
The Audit Report for the Academic Performance Audit (APA) should highlight the affirmation, commendations, and areas of concern and also indicate the performance of the institution on all nine areas of evaluation using the benchmarked and enhanced standards without stating any specific decisions on the whole as in the case of accreditation. The Report will be sent to the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) and the HEP will then be given a report on its state of health for its attention and further action.

4.11.3 For Self-Accreditation Status
To be granted self-accreditation status, an HEP has to be invited by the Minister to apply for it based on a set of eligibility criteria. On getting the invitation by the Minister, MQA will conduct an institutional audit which will be the basis for granting self-accreditation status.

4.11.4 For Other Purposes
An institutional audit is an instrument that can be utilised for a variety of purposes in the evaluation and assessment of institutions or specific aspects of them. They can range from audit for purposes of admission and student assessment to institutional rating and programme discipline. The nature of the findings and judgments of these varied audits can be used for different purposes accordingly.
4.12 Appeal

All appeals can be made in relation to:

i. factual contents of the reports;

ii. substantive errors within the report; or

iii. any substantive inconsistency between the oral exit report, the final audit report and the decision of the Agency.

4.13 Follow Up

The HEP will inform MQA as to the progress arising from the Audit Report. The purpose of the ongoing interaction is to:

i. get feedback on the report and the audit process, and on the extent to which the HEP considers the Audit Report to be authoritative, rigorous, fair and perceptive;

ii. ensure corrective actions are taken if so required; and

iii. have a dialogue with those responsible for follow up action as to how recommendations will be integrated into the HEP's continual quality improvement plan.
Section 5  The Panel of Auditors

INTRODUCTION

Assessments by the audit panel are based firstly on the Self-Review Portfolio (SRP) submitted by the higher education provider (HEP), which is further supported by observation, written and oral evidences and personal interaction during the audit visit.

The HEP is expected to have the necessary checking mechanisms in place and to be able to demonstrate to the audit panel that the procedures are effectively utilised and there are plans to address any shortfall.

5.1 Appointing an Audit Panel

The selection of the panel is guided by the characteristics of the HEP to be audited, the type of the audit, the availability and suitability of prospective panel members and their expertise and experience in quality audit and higher education.

5.1.1 Personal and General Attributes of Auditors

Auditors should be open-minded and mature. They should be good speakers and good listeners. They should possess sound judgment, analytical skills and tenacity. They should have the ability to perceive situations in a realistic way, understand complex operations from a broad perspective and understand the role of individual units within the overall organisation.

The auditors should be able to apply the above attributes in order to:

- obtain and assess objective evidence fairly;
- remain true to the purpose of the audit;
- evaluate constantly the effects of audit observations and personal interactions during an audit;
- treat concerned personnel in a way that will best achieve the audit purpose;
- perform the audit process without deviating due to distractions;
- commit full attention and support to the audit process;
- react effectively in stressful situations;
- arrive at generally acceptable conclusions based on audit observations; and
- remain true to a conclusion despite pressure to change that is not based on evidence.

It is not expected that each panel member possesses all the characteristics and experience required, but as a group, the panel should possess all the qualities and attributes which may include some or all of the following.
i. Higher education qualification or further education and training aspects:
   • Appropriate subject knowledge and teaching experience
   • Knowledge of curriculum design and delivery
   • Programme leadership or management experience
   • Knowledge of higher education or further education and training, including understanding of current responsibilities and requirements and consequent organisational features relevant to particular programmes
   • Experience in research and scholarly activities

ii. Quality audit aspects:
   • An understanding of the context and environment within which the HEP operates
   • Commitment to the principles of quality audit and quality assurance in higher education
   • Knowledge of quality assurance, methods and terminology
   • Experience in quality reviews and accreditation processes
   • Ability to relate processes to outputs and outcomes
   • An appreciation that inconsistencies can occur between the theory of quality and organisational realities

iii. General aspects:
   • Integrity
   • Discretion
   • Timeliness
   • Ability to communicate effectively
   • Ability to focus knowledge and experience to evaluate quality assurance procedures and techniques, and to suggest good practices and starting points for improvements
   • Ability to work in a team
   • Breadth of perspective
   • Commitment and diligence

5.1.2 Responsibilities of the auditors
Auditors are responsible for:
   • complying with the applicable audit requirements;
   • communicating and clarifying audit requirements;
   • planning and carrying out assigned responsibilities effectively and efficiently;
   • documenting the observations;
   • reporting the audit results;
   • retaining and safeguarding documents pertaining to the audit;
   • submitting such documents as required;
   • ensuring such documents remain confidential;
• treating privileged information with discretion; and
• co-operating with, and supporting, the Chairperson.

Auditors should:
• remain within the scope of the audit;
• exercise objectivity;
• collect and analyse evidence that is relevant and sufficient to draw conclusions regarding the audited quality system;
• remain alert to any indications of evidence that can influence the audit results and possibly require more extensive auditing;
• act in an ethical manner at all times; and
• be able to answer questions such as:
  o *Are the procedures, documents and other information describing or supporting the required elements of the quality system known, available, understood and used by the HEP's personnel?*
  o *Are all documents and other information used to describe the quality system adequate to achieve the required quality objectives?*

5.2 Conflicts of Interest

As the audit panel is being selected, prospective auditors must declare their interest in the assignment. If the prospective auditor has a direct interest, the MQA may exclude him from consideration. The MQA then, will send the list of prospective auditors to the HEP concerned to allow it to register objections, if any. If an HEP disagrees with a prospective auditor, the HEP is obliged to furnish reasons for its objection. However, the final decision whether to select a particular person as an auditor rests with the MQA.

Conflicts of interest may be categorised as personal, professional or ideological.
• Personal conflicts could include animosity or close friendship between an auditor and the Chief Executive Officer or other senior manager of the HEP, or being related to one, or being a graduate of the HEP, or if an auditor was excessively biased for or against the HEP due to some previous event.
• Professional conflicts could occur if an auditor had been a failed applicant for a position in the HEP, was a current applicant or a candidate for a position in the HEP, was a senior adviser, examiner or consultant to the HEP, or is currently attached to an HEP that is competing with the one being audited.
• An ideological conflict may be based on differing world views and value systems. An example of this type of conflict would be an auditor's complete lack of sympathy to the style, ethos, type or political inclination of the HEP.
5.3 The Audit Panel

Potential members for an audit panel are selected from the Register of Auditors. The selection of auditors depends on the type of the audit, the characteristics of the HEP, and the need to have a panel that is coherent and balanced in background and experience.

It is crucial that the panel of auditors works together as a team, and should not attempt to apply pre-conceived templates to their consideration of the HEP, nor appear to address inquiries from entirely within the perspective of their own specialty or the practices of their own HEP. Unless otherwise arranged, all communications between the HEP and members of the panel must be via the MQA.

5.3.1 The Chairperson

The Chairperson is the key person in an audit and should have experience as an auditor. It is the Chair’s responsibility to create an atmosphere in which critical professional discussion can take place, where opinions can be liberally and considerately exchanged, and in which integrity and transparency prevail. Much of the mode and accomplishment of the audit exercise depends on the Chairperson’s facilitating the panel to do its work as a team rather than as a set of individuals, and also to bring out the best in those whom the panel meets.

The Chairperson presents the oral exit report summarising the tentative findings of the team to the representatives of the HEP. The Chairperson also has a major role in the preparation of the written report and in ensuring that the oral exit report is not materially different from the final report.

5.3.2 The Secretary

The panel Secretary is expected to compile the report during the visit and works closely with the Chairperson to complete the draft report shortly after the visit. The Secretary is responsible for organising the contributions from the other team members, and to ensure that the overall report is coherent, logical and internally consistent.

If important areas have been omitted from a team member’s write-up, it is the responsibility of the team Secretary either to contact that member for additional details, or to supply the missing content himself.

It is important for the Secretary to compare his draft report with the set of strengths and concerns identified by the panel members to ensure that all areas are well documented in the text of the report. Attention should be paid so that comments made are based on due compliance to the quality assurance standards as contained in this Code. Specific tasks of the Secretary involve:

- To ensure that the exit report accurately summarises the outcomes of the visit and is consistent with the reporting framework;
• To coordinate and liaise with the panel members with respect to the programme audit report; and
• To ensure that the HEP’s plan of action -- following the audit visit and in response to the conditions made by the panel -- is considered by the panel and subsequently approved.

5.3.3 The MQA Officer
The MQA officer has the following responsibilities:
• Keep copies of handouts, database pages, evaluation reports, organisational charts, for incorporation, as appropriate, in the final report;
• To act as a resource person for policy matters;
• To ensure that the panel conducts itself in accordance with its ethical responsibilities;
• To liaise with the HEP liaison officer;
• To coordinate and liaise with the panel members;
• To coordinate and liaise within MQA to ensure that the report is processed effectively and in a timely manner; and
• To provide other relevant administrative services.

5.4 Audit Visit and the Roles and Responsibilities of the Panel
When the Self-Review Portfolio (SRP) is submitted to the MQA, it is distributed to members of the audit panel who examine the portfolio to determine that the documentations are complete as well as to determine the reliability and effectiveness of the HEP’s quality system. In evaluating and checking the HEP’s Self-Review Portfolio, the audit panel will:
• respect the objectives and values of the HEP;
• validate the HEP’s conclusions and proposed improvement activities;
• contribute towards the HEP’s process of self-reviewing by pointing out aspects that require attention; and
• reach a judgment of the HEP’s achievement based on the scope and purpose of the audit.

Panel members are selected so that the panel as a whole possesses the expertise and experience to enable the audit to be carried out effectively. Members may translate their different perspectives into different emphases in their attention to the audit process, and a concentration on certain aspects of the portfolio. These differences should not distract them from a fair and collective assessment.

5.4.1 Before the Audit Visit
Before the Audit Visit, panel members are to have read thoroughly the HEP’s Self-Review Portfolio. This is to familiarise themselves with the HEP’s policies, procedures and criteria for quality, as well as the purpose and possible outcomes
of the audit. Adequate exploration of issues by the audit panel depends on panel members being thoroughly familiar with the HEP’s Self-Review Portfolio. This is crucial because the confidence of the HEP in the review and the respect of the staff of the HEP for the panel are greatly reduced if the auditors’ remarks or questions reveal ignorance of the information provided.

The SRP should be read at two levels. At one level, the auditor reads its contents for information on the HEP’s system, and forms preliminary views on that system. At another level, the auditor forms an opinion on the quality of the self-review evaluation and the depth of the analysis itself. The auditor might formulate questions such as:

- How thorough is the SRP?
- Does it show that the HEP has a strong process of ongoing self-review?
- How perceptive is the SRP?
- Does it clearly identify strengths and weaknesses?
- Does it propose appropriate actions on the latter?

An auditor’s analysis of the SRP should result in:

- an understanding of the major characteristics of the HEP relevant to the audit;
- the identification of broad topics for investigation that arise from these characteristics; and
- the generation of other ideas and hypotheses about the HEP, including its strengths, concerns, quality system and proposed improvement programme.

Auditors may also find it helpful to record thoughts about the following:

- Further information to be sought from the HEP in advance of the visit - this may be needed to clarify the portfolio, to assist in planning the Audit Visit programme, or to save time during the Audit Visit.
- Further information to be made available by the HEP during the Audit Visit - this is common when the information sought would be voluminous, and a short time browsing through it on campus would be satisfactory.
- Comments to be passed to the HEP before the Audit Visit, but not for immediate response - these are typically a forewarning of issues that may be raised.
- Possible people or groups to be interviewed during the Audit Visit.

Each auditor is expected to produce notes to be submitted to the MQA and circulated to other panel members at least a week before the Preliminary Meeting. These notes set down the major topics or concerns detected by that auditor. This advance information saves time at the Preliminary Meeting, and assists the meeting to focus quickly on substantive matters.

5.4.2 Preliminary Meeting
At the Preliminary Meeting, panel members consider the comments on issues of particular interest or concern, and may request any further information or clarification they need
from the HEP. This input guides the preparation of an initial programme for the Audit Visit. The Preliminary Meeting provides an opportunity for the panel members to develop into a team with a common purpose rather than a group of individuals with divergent goals.

The intention of the Preliminary Meeting is to ensure that all panel members:
• understand the purpose, context, parameters and constraints of audit in general and of any particular aspects of this audit;
• understand the sort of judgments and recommendations expected;
• familiar with the MQA's procedures for conducting an institutional audit;
• recognise that any preliminary judgments formed during the reading of the portfolio will be subject to amendment as a result of the Audit Visit, with the final conclusions based on explicit and secure evidence;
• avoid judging the HEP solely or primarily in terms of their home campus or organisation; and
• have an opportunity to share ideas, get acquainted and recognise the need to contribute their own ideas, experience, expertise and knowledge with sensitivity to each other’s views and contributions.

5.4.3 During the Audit Visit
At the preliminary meeting, issues may have been raised or have been resolved. However, there could still be significant disagreements between panel members on some issues. Such differences must be resolved by the end of the Audit Visit, and plans should be made for questioning and verifying the issues raised. While this may require some lively debate in public meetings, it is important that auditors do not argue with each other at these times. This is to avoid a public presentation of the lack of unanimity and to avoid wasting the short time available for interaction with members of the HEP.

In group discussions, panel members should work with and through the Chair without being too formal. Members should respect the agenda agreed by the panel for the various meetings, and support the Chair as he matches the pace of the meeting to the size of its agenda.

During interviews with members of the HEP, the panel should clarify issues, and seek explanations, justifications and further information, if necessary. Creating an atmosphere for genuine dialogue is extremely important. Questioning should be rigorous but fair and consistent. In particular, panel members need to:
• explore discrepancies between what is written and what is said;
• seek clarification and confirmation when required;
• listen as well as ask;
• concentrate on major rather than minor issues;
• participate in a collaborative manner;
• be aware that the dynamics of the panel and of its relation to the staff of the HEP will change and develop during the visit; and
• put auditees at their ease to ensure their full and active contributions.

Panel members may also offer occasional suggestions as appropriate, but without slipping into the role of a consultant. The panel must do its utmost to unearth and consider all information relevant to its conclusions. A panel uses a variety of questioning styles to gather the information it requires, ranging from discursive through to directive.

To pursue a particular issue, the panel may begin by seeking information through an open-ended question, and then investigate the issue further, probing it through asking other questions based on the answer to the first question. This often leads to the use of closed questions and finally checking to confirm the impression obtained.

The panel considers both quantitative and qualitative data, looking for specific strengths or areas for improvement and highlighting examples of good practice. Within the scope of the audit, the panel’s work depends on well-chosen sampling. The selection of samples occurs at two levels. The first arises from the auditors’ analysis of the portfolio, during which particular areas may be identified as significant or problematic, and therefore selected for further investigation. This process is sometimes called scoping. At the second level, the panel decides what documentary or oral evidence is needed to sample within these areas. Some sampling may be done to check information already presented in the SRP. If this verifies the information, the panel may use the rest of the portfolio with confidence in its accuracy and comprehensiveness, and avoid the repetition of collecting for itself information that is already available in the HEP’s written documents.

Although a panel cannot cover all issues in depth, it delves into some issues through a process known as tracking or trailing. This form of sampling focuses on a particular issue and pursues it in depth through several layers of the organisation. For example, to check that procedures are being implemented, a selection of relevant reports might be sought, and the way in which whether a related issue had been dealt with would be tracked. Another instance would be the investigation of a system-wide issue, such as the way in which student evaluations of teaching are handled. An HEP may need to be informed in advance of the areas in which this approach is to be used, so that the necessary documentation and personnel are available to the panel. Some of the materials may be able to be supplied in advance of the visit.

Triangulation is the technique of investigating an issue by considering information on it from sources of different types, such as testing the perceptions held about it by different individuals in the organisation. For example, selected policies and their implementation may be discussed with senior management, with other staff and with students to see if the various opinions and experiences of the policy and its workings are consistent.
Aspects of a topic may be checked through committee minutes, course and teaching evaluations, programme reviews, reports of professional association accreditation, and external examiners’ reports. The panel must determine where inconsistencies are significant and are detracting from the achievement of the HEP’s objectives. The panel may also attempt to detect the reasons for such inconsistencies.

If an interviewee makes a specific serious criticism, the panel should verify whether this is a general experience of that group, as well as following it up subsequently and in other ways.

Panel members must plan and focus their questions. They should avoid:
- asking multiple questions;
- using much preamble to questions;
- telling anecdotes or make speeches;
- detail the situation in their own organisation; and
- offer advice (suggestions for improvement and examples of good practice elsewhere can be included in the audit report).

A good discipline before asking any question is to ask oneself:

*How can I ask this question in the fewest possible words?*

The questioning and discussion must always be fair and polite. It must, however, be rigorous and incisive, as the audit report must reflect the panel’s view of the HEP, in respect of both achievements and weaknesses, and not merely describe a well-constructed facade. The audit panel must collect convincing evidence during the Audit Visit. The evidence-gathering process must therefore be thorough.

The panel must come to clear and well-founded conclusions in the context of:
- the terms of reference of the audit;
- the scope of the audit;
- the nature of the HEP; and
- good practices both within and without academia.

**5.4.4 After the Audit Visit**

After the Audit Visit, panel members read, comment on and, as desired, contribute to the draft or drafts of the audit report. All panel members should be satisfied that the report is accurate and balanced. On the submission of the audit report, the MQA will conduct an evaluation of the effectiveness of the audit panel. A report on the whole audit process will be prepared by the MQA officer and will be submitted to the relevant committee.
5.5 The Audit Report

The report outlines the panel's findings, commendations and recommendations. The panel comes to its conclusions through its interpretation of the specific evidence it has gathered, and the extent and weight of the recommendations are determined by the observed facts.

Audit reports should not contain vague or unsubstantiated statements. Firm views are stated categorically, avoiding excessive subtlety. Reports do not comment on individuals nor appeal to irrelevant standards.

The panel's findings include the identification of commendable practices observed in the HEP, and the report draws attention to these. The report deals with all relevant areas, but without excessive detail or trying to list all possible strengths. In writing the conclusions and recommendations, the following factors are kept in mind:

- Conclusions should be short, brief and direct to the point.
- Conclusions will address issues and not provide details of processes.
- Conclusions will be prioritised to provide direction to the HEP.
- Conclusions will:
  - take into account the HEP's own programme of improvement;
  - make constructive comment on plans of improvement that will push the HEP towards its goals and objectives; and
  - make recommendations for improvement in aspects not covered by the Self-Review Portfolio.
INTRODUCTION

In preparing the final audit report, the auditors are guided by the following format. As far as possible, the auditors should stay within this prescribed format.

6.1 The Cover Page

Title : Report of an Audit on (Name of higher education provider)

Date of visit :


Footnote : This privileged communication is the property of the Malaysian Qualifications Agency.

6.2 Table of Contents

6.3 Memorandum

This should include a signed statement from the panel of auditors composed as follows:

To : Malaysian Qualifications Agency.

From : The panel of auditors that visited (name of HEP) on (date)

The panel of auditors that visited the (name of HEP) on (date) is pleased to provide the following report of its findings and conclusions.

Respectfully,

________________________
Name, Chairperson

________________________
Name, Secretary

________________________
Name, Member

________________________
Name, Member
6.4 Introduction and Composition of the Audit Panel

A typical example:

An assessment of the (name of HEP) was conducted on (date) by a Panel of Auditors representing the Malaysian Qualifications Agency. The panel expresses its appreciation to the Chief Executive Officer (name), academic staff, management staff and students for their interest and candour during the audit visit. The team also expresses a special thank you to (name) who acted very efficiently as the liaison officer and attended to all the needs of the team.

After the paragraph of introduction, list the members of the panel of auditors, giving their names, titles and institutions and their roles in the panel as chair, secretary, or member. For example:

- **Chair**: Name
  Designation and Affiliation

- **Secretary**: Name
  Designation and Affiliation

- **Member**: Name
  Designation and Affiliation

- **Member**: Name
  Designation and Affiliation

- **Member**: Name
  Designation and Affiliation

- **Secretariat**: Name
  Designation and Affiliation

6.5 Abstract

Provide an abstract of the audit report.

6.6 Summary of Panel of Auditors’ Findings

The summary of the audit finding will depend on the nature and type of the audit. The panel will include their commendation, affirmation and recommendation based on the categories outlined in Section 4.11.

6.6.1 For Continuation or Cessation of Programme Accreditation

1. **Commendation**: Aspects of the provision of the programme that are considered worthy of praise.
2. **Affirmation**: Proposed improvements by the HEP to aspects of the programme, which the panel believes are significant and which it welcomes.

3. **Recommendation for Maintenance of Accreditation**: Where the panel recommends maintenance of accreditation of programmes, such a recommendation may be subjected to mandatory requirements, which the HEP must comply within a stipulated time period.

   The panel may also suggest other areas of improvement to enhance quality of the programme. Although these additional recommendations are optional, the HEP are nevertheless strongly encouraged to implement them.

4. **Recommend the Cessation of Accreditation**: Where the panel recommends the cessation of accreditation of programmes, such recommendations must state the reasons for the cessation.

### 6.6.2 For Academic Performance Audit

The Audit Report for the Academic Performance Audit (APA) should highlight the affirmation, commendations, and areas of concern and also indicate the performance of the institution on all nine areas of evaluation using the benchmarked and enhanced standards without stating any specific decisions on the whole as in the case of accreditation. The Report will be sent to the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) and the HEP will then be given a report on its state of health for its attention and further action.

### 6.6.3 For Self-Accreditation Status

1. **Commendation**: Aspects of the institutional provisions that are considered worthy of praise.

2. **Affirmation**: Proposed improvements by the HEP to aspects of the institutional provisions which the panel believes are significant and which it welcomes.

3. **Recommend the Granting of a Self-Accreditation Status**: Recommendation for the granting of a Self-Accreditation status may take one of the following:
   - Self-Accreditation status is conferred without any mandatory requirement. However, the panel may suggest areas of improvement to enhance quality of the institution.
   - Self-Accreditation status may be conferred subject to mandatory requirement, which the HEP must comply within the stipulated time period.

4. **Recommend not to Grant the Self-Accreditation Status**: Where the accreditation is not granted, the report must state the reasons for such a recommendation.
6.6.4 For Other Purposes
The audit panel will summarise their commendation, affirmation and recommendation based on the purposes of the institutional audit, which ranges from audit for purposes of admission and student assessment to institutional rating, programme discipline and the maintenance of self-accreditation status.

In general, the report should adhere to the points reported orally in the exit meeting with the HEP and follow the order in which the items will be listed in the body of the report. For concerns or problems, the panel should indicate their relative urgency and seriousness, and express any recommendations in generic or alternative terms. All items cited here should be supported by documentation in the body of the report.

6.7 Previous Quality Assurance or Accreditation Assessments and Progress Reports

Where applicable, summarise the key findings and recommendations of the most recent assessment of the HEP or programmes, including progress report addressing any problems identified previously.

Give the dates of the previous assessments and reports. Conclude this by summarising the areas of concern in the assessment that have been corrected and problems that still remain.

6.8 The Self-Review Portfolio

The panel must comment on the organisation, completeness, reliability and consistency of the data. It should ask questions such as: Were the numerical data (e.g., applicant, admissions, financial) updated to the current year?

The panel should comment on the comprehensiveness and depth of analysis of the HEP self-review and the organisation and quality of its conclusions and recommendations. The panel must also comment on the self-review in terms of the degree of participation by the HEP’s academic staff, administrators and students. It should mention the degree to which the panel’s major conclusions are consistent with those of the self-review of the HEP.
6.9 History of the Higher Education Provider

Briefly summarise the history of the HEP and supply figures for enrolment as documented.

Briefly describe the setting of the HEP, its mission and goals as well as its role in the state and the local community. Describe also the relationship of the HEP with other centres, and if relevant, geographically separated campuses, programmes, and sites.

6.10 Report on the Higher Education Provider in Relation to the Nine Areas of Evaluation

This section of the report should contain a summary narrative of what has been found during the Institutional Audit. It is structured around the nine areas of evaluation for quality assurance stated in Section 2. All comments must be based on sound evidence submitted by the HEP or discovered by the Panel during its Audit Visit. The narrative should address each of the areas and questions listed below, which may be augmented or be in response to the types of questions listed in Appendix 4. At the end of each subsection, the narrative should indicate the extent to which the Benchmarked Standards and Enhanced Standards for specific aspects of the nine quality assurance areas have been met.

6.10.1 Institutional Vision, Mission, Educational Goals and Learning Outcomes;

- Describe the HEP's vision and mission
- Summarise the outcomes of the educational programmes
  - Students should exhibit these outcomes as evidence of their achievement.
  - If there are no outcome-based educational goals, please state so in report.
  - Cite evidence that the outcomes reflect the mission and goals of the HEP and are understood by the academic staff, students and administrators and are achieved or used in designing the programmes.
  (If outcomes are lengthy, include them in an appendix).

The institutional audit is to see if the HEP has set appropriate goals and whether the curricula, the educational resources and the management processes are designed to achieve the outcomes. Do not get misled by statements of mission and goals or vision statement about the structure, goals and aspirations of the HEP. These provide a context and establish strategic directions, but they are not substitutes for statements of learning outcomes that should be translated down to departments and programmes.

6.10.2 Curriculum Design and Delivery

- How are learning outcomes policies developed and how are these related to the Malaysian Qualifications Framework (MQF)?
- Describe the system of curriculum planning, implementation, evaluation and management. Where does the responsibility for these activities reside?
• Comment on the HEP’s effectiveness in achieving a coherent and coordinated curricula.
• Comment on the HEP’s strategic assessment and planning that serves as a framework to the accomplishment of the institutional goals and objectives.
• How is the teaching and learning strategy defined and communicated to the staff and students?
• How are independent learning skills developed? How are projects supervised? What training is provided to supervisors?
• How are group projects managed and assessed?
• What is the evidence that students acquire self-directed learning skills and use data in realistic problem solving?
• Is computer-assisted learning employed? Comment on the use of communication technologies.
• Is there evidence that ethical principles and appropriate attitudes are being nurtured and developed?
• If practical training is conducted in several sites, what efforts are made to ensure there is equivalency in educational quality of experience and the evaluation of students?
• How does the HEP coordinate and monitor the teaching-learning activities to avoid redundancies and deficiencies?
• How are problems with timetabling addressed and student workload monitored?

6.10.3 Assessment of Students

• Are there stated criteria, standards and procedures for student assessment, advancement, graduation, disciplinary action, appeal and dismissal?
• Are these clearly stated, adequately published, disseminated and widely understood by students, faculty and administrators?
• Comment on their appropriateness in relation to the educational goals and compliance to standards.
• How are students assessed? Does the assessment of student achievement employ a variety of measures of knowledge, competence and performance and do they support the attainment of outcomes? Do students receive prompt feedback on tests of their performance?
• How do students demonstrate they have achieved the programme learning outcomes?
• Are there continuous evaluation to identify students in trouble, with timely counselling and remediation?
• How is practical training supervised and assessed? Describe whether students are observed taking part in the actual on-job-training.
• Evaluate the consistency of the application of the grading system across programmes. Comment on the use of narrative description of student performance and of non-cognitive achievement.
• Comment on the composition and role of the assessment committee.
• How does the committee ensure that examination procedures (e.g., how questions are formulated and vetted, how answer scripts are marked) are fair, valid and reliable?
• Are there coordination and consistency in student assessment?
• Are students sufficiently supervised and given feedback?
• What are the security arrangements for examinations? Comment on the system of record keeping with regards to the security, confidentiality and accessibility to students.
• Are there clearly understood procedures to assure due process, i.e., timely notice of a disciplinary charge or an adverse academic action and an opportunity for fair impartial hearing?

6.10.4 Student Selection and Support Services
• Are the requirements for admission adequate? Describe the organisation and operation of the admission committee. Comment on the admission process.
• Comment on the number of applicants over the recent period and the number of acceptances. Evaluate the sufficiency of qualified applicants in relation to the admission standards. Mention the proportion of gender and minorities.
• Is the resource distribution ample and appropriate to support the number of elective students, commitment to continuing education, research, service and consultancy activities?
• What are the policies for admitting transfer students?
• Does the HEP have a policy for disadvantaged students?
• Summarise the methods of orientation of new students, early warning system for academic difficulty and system of academic counselling, tutoring and remediation.
• Discuss the attrition rate and the proportion of students on leave of absence.
• Evaluate the effectiveness of students’ counselling and support programmes, citing students’ input.
• Does the HEP provide financial aid through its own resources? Comment on the operation and accessibility of the loan office. Are students’ needs met by loans and scholarships?
• Describe the health service and professional counselling made available to the students. Evaluate the information dissemination and accessibility of the services.
• Evaluate the adequacy of students’ support that contributes to the quality of student life.

6.10.5 Academic Staff
• State the number, adequacy, qualification and experience of the academic staff.
• Describe and evaluate the involvement of academic staff in other scholarly activities which impact on their teaching.
• Comment on the involvement of the academic staff in meeting the continuing education needs of the stakeholders.
• What is the impact of continuing education activities, if any?
• Summarise the number of academic staff members who are principal investigators and the value of research grants. What are the priority areas for research?
• Do academic staff members have sufficient input into organisational decision-making, through the committee structure or directly?
• Comment on the opportunities for communication among academic staff members and on activities that promote collegiality.
• Are there centres of excellence on the campus? What are their main activities?
• What are the national and international recognitions awarded to academic staff?
• Evaluate the criteria and procedures for appointment and promotion.
• How effective is the system of mentoring academic staff, including encouraging professional development, scholarly activity and continuing productivity?
• Is organised support available to assist academic staff to develop teaching skills, and instructional materials?
• Does the HEP ensure its academic staff are knowledgeable about current trends in content, pedagogy and curriculum design to accomplish learning outcomes and methods of measuring student performance?
• How does the HEP assure that part-time staff possess the required skills to teach and evaluate students?
• Evaluate the support given to the academic staff involved in the overall sense of mission and philosophy, policies, resources and cohesion in teaching, service and research.

6.10.6 Educational Resources
• Comment on the form, adequacy, quality and maintenance of the HEP’s general facilities. Comment on the expectations of students.
• Is the space for educational activities adequate, appropriate and organised for the number of students, for current or desired curriculum structure, for the number of existing and desired academic staff, and for anticipated research expansion?
• Evaluate the adequacy of the library hours, services, holdings, staff and facilities. Does it meet the needs of the students and academic staff?
• Is there adequate study and small-group conference space in the library?
• What is the quality of the library’s automated databases and bibliographic search, computer and audio-visual capabilities?
• Is the library adequately funded? Show evidence.
• Show the mechanism to assure student and academic staff provide input on library policy and procedures?
• Evaluate the HEP’s use of computer-assisted learning, particularly as an integral part of programme delivery.
• Comment on the availability and accessibility of hardware and software, and on the academic staff’s interest and ability to use them.
• Is there ample resources being utilised to cultivate self-learning behaviour?
• Are there resources to help the academic staff identify or develop educational software?
• Describe the major facilities used for practical experiences.
• Comment on evidence of verification of the maintenance and calibration records.
• For collaborative arrangements, are agreements up-to-date and explicit on the role of and expectations for students? Does the HEP have control and authority for the educational programmes?
• Are there any problems intrinsic to the facilities themselves, in the relationship of the HEP’s operation?
• What are the sources of funding of the HEP? Are they adequate to support the educational programmes?
• Briefly describe the trend in revenue sources and expenditure over the years and describe the current and predicted fiscal condition.
• What are the priority areas in financial allocation? If there is a current or potential fiscal imbalance, does the HEP have a credible plan to address it?
• Is there evidence that the educational programmes are being compromised by budgetary cuts or pressure to generate income?
• Are there plans for increasing fees and whether the escalation in costs will have an adverse effect on applicants and enrolled students? How is the HEP positioned for restructuring of educational financing?
• Evaluate the research activities of the HEP (areas of emphasis, level of commitment, quality and quantity) in the context of the mission and goals of the HEP.
• Evaluate the amount of internal support for research and the level of assistance available to staff members in securing external support.
• Assess the impact of research activities on the education of students, including opportunities for students to participate in research.
• Using data, develop a composite assessment of the educational, research, publication activities of the departments, in the context of the mission and goals of the HEP.

6.10.7 Programme Monitoring and Review
• What internal and external measures are used in programme monitoring and review?
• Cite and evaluate the evidence of educational effectiveness obtained from outcome measures, such as student attrition rates, rates of academic progress and graduation, scores on professional examinations and other tests, success and quality of appointments of recent graduates and performance in postgraduate programmes.
• Does the curriculum committee receive these data and use them to make needed changes? Evaluate the adequacy and effectiveness of these processes.
• Summarise the mechanisms by which quality control is assured including oversight of programmes and teaching quality, and avenues of student input.

6.10.8 Leadership, Governance and Administration

• Briefly describe the composition and role of the board of management of the HEP, the Senate and any committees thereof at the HEP.
• Describe the role of academic leaders and their relationship with the HEP’s officials. Evaluate the effectiveness of these relationships and note any problems.
• Describe briefly the credentials of the academic leaders. Describe any mechanism of review and reappointment.
• Comment on the stability of the HEP’s leadership and its consistency and direction.
• Describe briefly the leadership style (manner of leadership; interaction with academic staff members; and communication with other HEP’s officials, staff and students).
• What are the leaders’ perceptions of HEP’s strengths and their agenda of strategic issues, directions, and plans for the future?
• Describe the leadership support and commitment for the programmes. Are the staffing adequate and the division of responsibility reasonable, effective and understood by the staff members and students?
• Do students and the academic staff perceive the administrative staff to be accessible and able to solve problems?
• Comment on the existence, currency and effectiveness of the HEP’s regulations in relation to academic activities.
• Evaluate the effectiveness of the policy-making body of the HEP and comment on any factors relating to clarity of charge, responsibilities, size, representation, and relationship with the academic leadership and management.
• Describe the appropriateness of the appointment process of the principal standing committees, and whether there are student representatives dealing with student-related matters.
• Evaluate the effectiveness of the principal standing committees.
• Are academic leaders appointed for a fixed period? What mechanisms exist for the periodic review of departments and heads? Note vacancies or long-standing interim arrangements.
• If there are programmes conducted in a mode other than internal, evaluate the relationship of the HEP with the parent provider in all sections of the standards including quality control mechanisms by the parent provider.
• If there are programmes conducted in campuses that are geographically separated, comment briefly on the administrative relationship between the main campus and the branch campuses.
• In geographically separated campuses, what mechanisms exist to assure functional integration and comparability of educational quality and consistency in student assessment across various sites of instruction?

• How are student support services (academic and career counselling, financial aid administration, health service and personal counselling,) supplied at the branch campuses? How well do these mechanisms work?

6.10.9 Total Continual Quality Improvement

• What are the structures and processes to ensure achievement of enhanced standards?

• Are significant stakeholders involved in improving programmes and HEP's quality? Cite the evidence and evaluate the effectiveness of changes that have been introduced pertaining to specific sections of the criteria and standards.
Appendix 1
Monitoring shall be triggered by one or more of the following:

1. Set duration or period for monitoring;
2. Request by the Higher Education Provider (HEP);
3. As part of provisional accreditation or accreditation, where required; and
4. Any other factor that necessitates monitoring.
Appendix 2
# General Comparison of Programme Accreditation and Institutional Audit Processes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programme Accreditation</th>
<th>Institutional Audit</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td><strong>HEP prepares documents for Accreditation of an approved programme</strong></td>
<td><strong>Documents according to Section 3 of COPIA (MQA-03)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Programme Self-Review Reports (MQA-02)</strong></td>
<td><strong>HEP conducts institutional self-review</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **MQA-01**  
- General information on HEP  
- Programme Description  
- Programme Standards | **HEP prepares and submits MQA-03 for Institutional Audit** |
| **HEP conducts programme self-review** | **MQA conducts External Institutional Audit** |
| **HEP prepares and submits MQA-01 and MQA-02 for Programme Accreditation** | **Recommendations to MQA Accreditation Committee** |
| **MQA conducts External Programme Audit** | **Recommendations to MQA Institutional Audit Committee** |
| **Self-Review Portfolio (SRP)**  
Part A: General information on HEP  
Part B: Information on the Nine of Evaluation for Quality Assurance Areas  
Part C: Self-Review Report |
Appendix 3
Flow Chart for Institutional Audit Process

1. **Submission of Self-Review Portfolio (MQA-03)**
2. **Registration and Verification of HEP Documentations**
   - Complete
   - Incomplete
3. **Notification of Names and Biodata of Panel of Auditors to HEP**
4. **Appointment of Auditors, Setting of Dates for Preliminary Meeting, Planning Visit, and Audit Visit**
   - HEP Disagrees
5. **Submission of HEP Documentations to Auditors**
6. **Receipt and Distribution of Report to Auditors**
7. **Preliminary Meeting for Panel Auditors**
8. **Audit Planning Visit**
10. **Draft Final Report**
11. **Final Report Amendment**
12. **Institutional Audit Committee Meeting**
13. **Verification**
14. **Feedback**
Appendix 4

Appendix 4 is the questions for the nine areas of programme quality. These are the questions used for programme accreditation, but some of them may be referred to for the purposes of institutional audit.
Questions for the Nine Areas of Programme Quality

The following contains specific questions on the nine areas that may help in preparing programme audit reports. The questions will also be a general guide to what the external auditors will look for when the external programme audit is carried out. The higher education provider (HEP) is encouraged to follow as closely as possible the guide below when preparing the report.

1 Institutional Vision, Mission and Educational Goals

1.1 What are the vision, mission and educational goals of the HEP?
1.2 How are these made known to the HEP’s internal and external stakeholders?
1.3 How do the mission statements and educational goals reflect the crucial elements of the processes and outcomes?
1.4 How do the mission statements and educational goals reflect national and global developments?
1.5 What are the processes involved in formulating the vision, mission, and educational goals?
1.6 Where are these statements cited?
1.7 How do the HEP ensure that the educational goals are consistent with the vision and mission of the HEP?
1.8 In what ways do the mission and goals encompass leadership qualities in the areas of social responsibility, research attainment, community involvement, ethical values, professionalism, and knowledge creation?
1.9 How do the HEP ensure that their official policies and practices are consistent with its purpose statements?
1.10 How are the governance structures and functions of the HEP and their relationships within the HEP defined? How are these communicated to all levels of management based on principles of transparency, accountability and authority?
1.11 What is the structure of the committee responsible for the educational programmes?
1.12 How are relevant stakeholders represented in this committee?
1.13 Who chairs the governing board and what are his powers?
1.14 What are the measures taken to ensure that the governing board is not subjected to undue external pressures?
1.15 What measures are taken to ensure that the mission and goals are formulated and reviewed upon consultation with principal stakeholders?
1.16 What is the level of autonomy given to the department in the design of the curriculum? What resources are made available to the department to facilitate this and to achieve the programme outcomes?
1.17 What is the degree of autonomy when it concerns franchised or licensed programmes?

1.18 How are the contributions of academic staff focussed on achieving the vision, mission and goals of the HEP, in curriculum development and implementation, social responsibility, staff development, academic supervision of students, and research?

2 Programme Leadership and Administration

2.1 Who is the academic leader for the programme and what are the criteria for appointment and responsibilities?

2.2 What is the level of responsibility that the programme leader has in the programme design and delivery?

2.3 What are the mechanisms and processes to allow for communication between the programme leadership and staff members?

2.4 What are the mechanisms and processes to allow for communication between the programme leadership and the HEP's leadership in relation to matters such as resources allocation?

2.5 Do students and the academic staff perceive the administrative staff to be accessible and able to solve problems?

2.6 How is the effectiveness of the principal standing committees evaluated?

2.7 How is the programme leadership evaluated?

2.8 What mechanisms are in place to evaluate the appropriateness and sufficiency of the administrative staff to support the implementation of the programme?

2.9 How regularly are programme reviews carried out?

2.10 If there are programmes conducted in campuses that are geographically separated, comment briefly on the administrative relationship between the main campus and the branches.

3 Programme Aims, Learning Outcomes, and Curriculum Design and Delivery

3.1 What is the rationale for the programme?

3.2 What are the aims of the programme and are these achieved?

3.3 How do the aims link to the vision and mission of the HEP?

3.4 What are the programme learning outcomes?

3.5 How do these learning outcomes meet the eight Malaysian Qualifications Framework (MQF) learning outcomes domains?

3.6 How do the individual modules or units contribute to the fulfilment of the programme learning outcomes?
3.7 What measures are used to show that the learning outcomes are achieved by students?

3.8 What are the findings of the needs assessment and how were they implemented?

3.9 How appropriate are the content, approach and the teaching-learning methods to the attainment of the programme learning outcomes?

3.10 How are the curriculum approach, structure and the teaching-learning activities of the programme determined?

3.11 How did the teaching-learning methods inculcate intellectual and practical skills, as well as positive attitudes? Are these methods appropriate?

3.12 How do the teaching-learning methods ensure that students take responsibility for their own learning and prepare them for life long learning?

3.13 How are academic staff and students trained to use information and communication technology for self-learning, access to information and for communication?

3.14 How does the curriculum encourage multi-disciplinary approaches to enhance personal development?

3.15 How does the curriculum encourage, monitor and appraise elective courses, study pathways or other activities?

3.16 How does the curriculum include co-curricular activities to enrich students’ experiences and foster personal development?

3.17 How does the programme incorporate core disciplines that are essential for understanding the concepts, principles and methods that support the programme outcomes?

3.18 How does the programme fulfil the requirements for the core disciplines?

3.19 How does the programme fulfil the standards appropriate to the field?

3.20 How often is the programme contents reviewed and how are scientific, technological and knowledge development incorporated?

3.21 How current are the contents and how are these updated to meet the current needs of society?

3.22 What are the mechanisms put in place to establish topics of contemporary importance at local, national and global levels?

3.23 How are student provided with the information about the programme learning outcomes and curriculum?

3.24 How are student notified of the methods of assessment for each module?

3.25 Where is the programme leadership responsible for the planning, implementation and improvement of the programme situated in the governing structure? What authority does it have in establishing procedures for planning and monitoring the programme?
3.26 What are the financial resources provided to the programme leadership in implementing the teaching learning activities, and in conducting programme evaluation for quality improvement?

3.27 How are stakeholders’ representations or consultation utilised in the planning, implementation, development and review of the programme?

3.28 How is employer feedback obtained and used in curriculum reviews?

3.29 What opportunities are given to students to develop linkages with external stakeholders?

3.30 What system is used in curriculum planning, implementation, evaluation and management?

3.31 Who is responsible for these activities?

3.32 How effectively is a coherent and coordinated curriculum achieved?

3.33 What assessment and planning framework are used to accomplish the programme goals and learning outcomes?

3.34 How is the teaching and learning strategy defined and communicated to staff and students?

3.35 How are independent learning skills developed?

3.36 How are projects supervised? What training is provided to supervisors?

3.37 How are group projects managed and assessed?

3.38 How do students acquire self-directed learning and problem solving skills?

3.39 How does the use of ICT support the teaching and learning of the programme?

3.40 How are ethical principles and appropriate attitudes, such as team work and leadership, nurtured and developed?

3.41 What efforts are made to ensure there is equivalency in educational quality of experience and the assessment of students in situations where practical training is conducted in different sites?

3.42 How are the timetabling and student workload monitored?

3.43 If there are programmes conducted in campuses that are geographically separated, what mechanisms exist to ensure functional integration, comparability of educational quality and consistency in student assessment across the various sites of delivery?

4 Assessment of Student

4.1 How are assessment principles, methods and practices aligned with programme aims and learning outcomes?

4.2 What are the criteria, standards and procedures for student evaluation, advancement, graduation, disciplinary action, appeal and dismissal and are
these clearly stated, adequately published, disseminated and widely understood by students, academic staff and administrators?

4.3 How is practical training supervised and assessed?

4.4 How is consistency of the application of the marking system across programmes maintained?

4.5 What is the composition and role of the examination committee?

4.6 Are students sufficiently supervised and given feedback in relation to assignments and projects?

4.7 How are the assessments reflective of the MQF level of the programme? How often are these reviewed to ensure currency with development in best practices?

4.8 How frequent and at what point are the methods of student assessment documented and communicated to students?

4.9 How do the assessment methods reflect summative and formative purposes as well as theory and practical assessments?

4.10 How appropriate are the methods used in assessing learning outcomes and competencies?

4.11 What mechanisms are put in place to ensure the validity, reliability and fairness of the assessment system?

4.12 What are the external sources that you refer to to improve methods of assessing?

4.13 How often are the assessment methods reviewed?

4.14 Where are the grading, assessment and appeal policies published and are the practices consistent with these?

4.15 How are changes made to policies communicated to the students?

4.16 How is security related to all assessment documents and records ensured?

4.17 What mechanisms are in place to review new methods of assessment?

5 Student Selection and Support Services

5.1 What are the HEPs admission policies including for the transfer of students and does the HEP have a policy for disadvantaged students?

5.2 How are these policies published and disseminated?

5.3 Discuss the attrition rate and the proportion of students on leave of absence.

5.4 How are the pre-requisite knowledge and skills for each programme or discipline defined?

5.5 Where other modes of selection are used, are they objectively and fairly structured?
5.6 Subject to national policies, are student selections free from discrimination and bias?

5.7 What measures are put in place to ensure that the selected students have capabilities that are consistent with the admission policies?

5.8 What are the policies and mechanisms for appeal?

5.9 What is the relationship between student selection, the educational programme and the desired characteristics of graduates? What developmental or remedial support measures are put in place to assist students who do not meet the competency level?

5.10 What are the retention policies and what measures are taken to ensure that these are not compromised to maintain a desired enrolment?

5.11 How often is the admission policy reviewed?

5.12 What measures are in place to ensure that selection of students at branch campuses are ultimately the responsibility of the awarding HEP?

5.13 How are the outcomes of student selection and performance monitored to improve the selection process?

5.14 What is the size of student intake for each session and how is this related to the capacity of the HEP to effectively deliver the programme at all stages of education and training?

5.15 What measures are put in place to ensure the adequacy of the HEP’s resources to accommodate all visiting, exchange, and transfer students?

5.16 What measures are put in place to review the size of student intake to meet the needs of society and the country?

5.17 What are the criteria and mechanisms to enable students to transfer to another programme?

5.18 What are the policies regarding recognition of prior learning and credit transfer and how do these apply?

5.19 What bridging course or other appropriate mechanisms are employed for students who wish to transfer to another programme?

5.20 How are the effectiveness of student counselling and support programmes evaluated?

5.21 What mechanisms are in place to facilitate student loans and scholarships?

5.22 How are health services and professional counselling made available and information about them disseminated to the students?

5.23 How adequate is student support and how does this contribute to the quality of student life?

5.24 What are the physical, social, recreational, sporting facilities and other support services available to students?
5.25 What are the mechanisms in place for complaints and appeals relating to student support services?

5.26 Which is the designated administrative unit responsible for planning and implementing student support services and how does this fit into the overall structure of the organisation in relation to hierarchy and authority? Who does the head of this unit report to?

5.27 What are the qualifications of the staff of this unit?

5.28 What measures are put in place to evaluate physical facilities and student support services regularly?

5.29 How important are student support services in relation to other major administrative areas within the HEP?

5.30 What measures are put in place to ensure that adequate and qualified counselling is provided and confidentiality maintained?

5.31 How does counselling monitor student progress and address personal and social needs?

5.32 What are the policies on student representation and are these in tandem with national policies and laws?

5.33 Where are the statement of student rights and responsibilities published and made available?

5.34 What is the jurisdiction of judicial bodies and the disciplinary responsibilities of HEP's officials?

5.35 How and where are the disciplinary procedures defined and distributed?

5.36 How are student activities and student organisations encouraged and facilitated?

5.37 What are the HEP's responsibilities regarding student publications or other media?

5.38 What measures are put in place to provide students with appropriate opportunity to participate in the formulation, management and evaluation of the curriculum, and in other matters relevant to students?

5.39 If there are programmes conducted in campuses that are geographically separated, how is student support (academic and career counselling, financial aid administration, health service and personal counselling) supplied at the branch campuses? How well do these mechanisms work?

6 Academic Staff

6.1 What are the policies pertaining to staff recruitment, qualifications, responsibilities, expertise and incentives?

6.2 What is the academic staff to student ratio for the programme and is this appropriate for the student size and teaching-learning methodologies?
6.3 What is the minimum number of staff necessary for implementing the programme?

6.4 Is organised support available to assist academic staff to develop teaching skills, and instructional materials?

6.5 How does the HEP ensure its academic staff are knowledgeable about current trends in pedagogy, about curriculum design to accomplish learning outcomes, and about methods of measuring student performance?

6.6 How does the HEP assure that part-time academic staff possess the required skills to teach and evaluate students?

6.7 What are the policies regarding the recruitment of technical and support staff?

6.8 How do these support the teaching and learning in the HEP?

6.9 How does the recruitment policy strike a balance between senior and junior academic staff, between academic and non-academic staff, and between full-time and part-time staff? What are the varying responsibilities of these staff?

6.10 What are the measures by which staff selection criteria include recognition of meritorious academic and other activities, other employment and social achievements, as well as peer recognition?

6.11 How does staff policy address matters related to service, development and appraisal?

6.12 What are the measures taken to clarify the roles of the management, programme leadership, and academic and administrative staff?

6.13 What are the policies and procedures pertaining to equitable work distribution and how are these implemented?

6.14 How are meritorious academic roles recognised and appropriately rewarded?

6.15 What measures are taken to provide for a systematic academic staff development?

6.16 How is formative guidance and mentoring provided for new staff?

6.17 What are the mechanisms in place to train academic staff to use information and communication technology for self-learning, access to information and for communication?

6.18 How are academic staff appraised? What measures are put in place to take into account national and international involvement in professional, academic and other relevant activities?

6.19 What are the policies and criteria in awarding academic positions, for example Professorship and Associate Professorship, and how are they in line with national policy and international best practices?
7 Educational Resources

7.1 What measures are taken to ensure that the academic staff have sufficient and appropriate physical facilities for effective delivery of the curriculum?

7.2 How do the physical facilities correspond with health and safety needs of the programme and comply with the relevant laws?

7.3 What steps are put in place to ensure that the library has adequate and up-to-date reference materials that meet the needs of the programme and research amongst staff and students?

7.4 How are library staffing and the provision for computer and information technology-mediated reference materials reflective of the needs of the staff and students?

7.5 What are the policies pertaining to practical-based programmes and how are these adequately met?

7.6 What are the policies regarding the selection and effective use of computers, internal and external networks and other effective means of using information and communication technology in the educational programme?

7.7 Is there adequate study and small-group meeting space?

7.8 How ample are the resources being utilised to cultivate self-learning behaviour?

7.9 How is the students’ learning environment regularly improved to keep up with the development in educational practices and changes in society?

7.10 What steps are taken to review the facilities from time to time and to assess the quality and appropriateness for current education and training?

7.11 What are the ways in which the use of technology is made a method for lifelong learning and evidence-based decision-making?

7.12 In what ways are the physical facilities made friendly to those with special needs?

(Questions 7.13 to 7.16 on research and development are meant mainly for HEPs running degree level programme and above)

7.13 How do the HEP's policies foster the relationship between research and scholarly activity and education?

7.14 What are the research priorities and facilities provided?

7.15 How is the interaction between research and education reflected in the curriculum? How does it influence current teaching, and prepare students for engagement in research, scholarship and development?

7.16 How does the HEP link research with development and commercialisation?
7.17 What are the policies on the use of educational expertise in the planning of educational programmes and in the development of new teaching and assessment methods?
7.18 How is expert access provided and how does the HEP encourage the use of such expertise for staff development and educational research in the programme?
7.19 What collaborative practices exist with other HEPs for student credit transfer?
7.20 What procedures are put in place in support of staff and student exchange?
7.21 What budgetary and procurement policies are in place to maintain the high quality of the programme?
7.22 How are clear lines of responsibility and authority for budgeting and resource allocation demonstrated?
7.23 What are the policies for the refund of tuition fees and other allowable payments and are these in accordance with the relevant laws?
7.24 What measures are in place to provide sufficient autonomy to those responsible for programmes in order to appropriately allocate resources?

8 Programme Monitoring and Review
8.1 How are various aspects of student performance analysed in relation to the mission of the HEP, the curriculum and the learning outcomes of the programme?
8.2 What internal and external measures are used in programme monitoring and review? How does the curriculum committee receive these data and use them to make needed changes and evaluate the adequacy and effectiveness of these processes?
8.3 How are student performance and progression analysed and used to provide feedback to the committees responsible for student selection, curriculum planning and student counselling?
8.4 What are the provisions for programme evaluation and do these use benchmark data through valid and reliable methods?
8.5 What mechanisms are put in place to actively involve teachers and students in programme evaluation and how are the results used for programme improvement?
8.6 What are the mechanisms and resources provided to monitor student progress?
8.7 How are stakeholders' feedback reviewed and implemented?
8.8 How does the HEP's internal self-review processes and mechanisms improve the programme?
8.9 Who are the relevant stakeholders in programme evaluation?
8.10 How are stakeholders given access to programme evaluation reports? How are their views on the relevance and the development of the curriculum taken into consideration?

8.11 In collaborative arrangements, evaluate the relationship between the HEPs involved in all its aspects, including quality assurance mechanisms of the awarding HEP.

9 **Continual Programme Quality Improvement**

9.1 What are the policies, procedures and mechanisms for regularly reviewing and updating the HEP’s programme structure, functions, strategies and core activities to assure quality?

9.2 What are the result of the review and the steps undertaken to implement the changes and outcomes?

9.3 How does quality assurance practices contribute to the fulfilment of programme learning outcomes?

9.4 What are the contributions of significant stakeholders in the continual quality improvement of the programme?