

Manual for Institutional Review of Sri Lankan Universities and Higher Education Institutions

Revised Edition

Institutional Review

Teaching
Learning

Curriculum Design
and Programme
Development

Quality
Assurance

Distance
Education

Student
Assessment
and Awards

Learning Resources,
Student Support,
and Progression

Postgraduate
Studies, Research,
Innovation, and
Commercialization

Governance and
Management

Strength and
Quality of Staff

Community
Engagement,
Consultancy, and
Outreach



**Manual for Institutional Review of
Sri Lankan Universities and
Higher Education Institutions**

Revised Edition



University Grants Commission

January 2023

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Foreword

Since the establishment of the University of Ceylon in Colombo under the Ceylon University Ordinance No. 20 of 1942 as the first university in the country, Sri Lanka's higher education system has grown to accommodate a growing number of students in both public and private higher education institutions. In parallel with the rapid growth of higher education in the country, and to address the quality related challenges, the Quality Assurance and Accreditation (QAA) Unit under the UGC was established in 2004, and renamed as the Quality Assurance and Accreditation Council (QAAC) in 2005. In 2016, the QAAC was again renamed as the Quality Assurance Council (QAC) to reflect its intended role. Quality Assurance is the means by which universities and higher education institutions can confidently guarantee that the quality of educational provision and the standards of awards are maintained and improved.

For the first time, Institutional Reviews and Subject Reviews were conducted from 2004 to 2013 using the original manual 'Quality Assurance Handbook for Sri Lankan Universities 2002' prepared with the support of the Quality Assurance Council of UK, with funding assistance from the Improving Relevance and Quality of Undergraduate Education (IRQUE) project of the World Bank. During the first cycle, the focus was on creating awareness of the benefits of quality assurance and promoting familiarity with the concept. Those who participated in the first cycle of quality reviews also felt that the quality assurance review process needed to be transparent, objective, and based on a set of predefined best practices and standards, and needed to implement scoring system based on evidence, as prescribed by the QAAC.

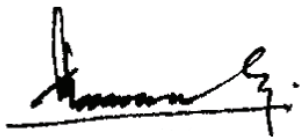
Subsequent to the closure of the first cycle of the External Quality Review, the UGC felt the need to revise the scope and the methodology of the review process for the second cycle. The scope of the external review was expanded upon in the second cycle based on feedback received in the first cycle, verifying compliance with minimum standards related to quality. Accordingly, the UGC-QAAC developed two manuals, one for Institutional Review and the other for Programme Review, by analysing pre-existing manuals from other nations and the existing manual with a more consultative approach in mind. During the development of the revised manuals, the concepts of Student-Centred Learning (SCL) and Outcome-Based Education (OBE) were incorporated. Accordingly, two separate manuals, one for institutional review and another for study program review titled *Manual for Institutional Review of Sri Lankan Universities and Higher Education Institutions (2015)*, and *Manual for Review of Undergraduate Study Programmes of Sri Lankan Universities and Higher*

Education Institutions (2015) respectively, were formulated. Accordingly, the second cycle of reviews were conducted using those two manuals. Funding assistance for the preparation of the two manuals and for conducting the reviews of the second cycle was provided by the Higher Education for the Twenty-first Century (HETC) project of the World Bank. The second cycle of Institutional Reviews was initiated in 2015 and completed in 2022. Taking into account the comments and suggestions of the reviewers and the universities based on their experiences, it was decided that the Manual for Institutional Review of Sri Lankan Universities and Higher Education Institutions - (2015) would be revised.

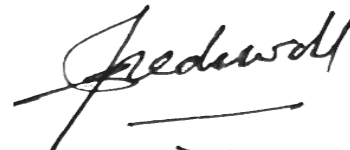
The upcoming Institutional Reviews will be conducted using this revised version of the manual. The World Bank funded Accelerating Higher Education Expansion and Development (AHEAD) Project of the Ministry of Education supported the revision and printing of the manual. The UGC is grateful to the AHEAD Operation for the assistance extended.

The UGC is happy to present this revised *Manual for Institutional Review of Sri Lankan Universities and Higher Education Institutions*, which provides guidance to universities and higher education institutions on standards that are useful for reviewers and resource persons in training programmes on quality assurance in higher education. The manual will be used to assess the universities in the context of UGC quality assurance framework and will help universities internalize the best practices described in the manual to achieve the desired standards of education provision as an integral part of the quality assurance process.

The UGC and AHEAD Operations would like to express their sincere appreciation towards the panel of authors of the revised version of the manual for their invaluable contributions in improving the quality of education provision at universities and higher education institutions in Sri Lanka.



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- Academic and administrative staff of the state universities of Sri Lanka for providing feedback after testing the applicability of the manual content,
- Ms. Chathurika Gunawardena, Assistant Secretary, QAC for the technical assistance extended to communicate with the UGC, Quality Assurance Standing Committee and Universities during different stages of manual formulation.

List of Abbreviations / Acronyms

AHEAD	Accelerating Higher Education Expansion and Development
BoS	Board of Study
BP	Best Practices
CEOs	Chief Executive Officers
CODL	Centre for Open and Distance Learning
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
CQA	Centre for Quality Assurance
CVCD	Committee of Vice Chancellors and Directors
DE	Distance Education
EDP	External Degree Programme
EE	Examples of Evidence
EQA	External Quality Assurance
ERC	Ethics Review Committee
FGS	Faculty of Graduate Studies
GEE	Gender Equity and Equality
HEIs	Higher Education Institutions
HETC	Higher Education for the Twenty-first Century
HR	Human Resource
ICT	Information & Communication Technology
ILOs	Intended Learning Outcomes
IPR	Intellectual Property Rights
IQA	Internal Quality Assurance
IQAC	Internal Quality Assurance Cells
IR	Institutional Review
IRQUE	Improving Relevance and Quality of Undergraduate Education
IRR	Institutional Review Report
LMS	Learning Management Systems
MIS	Management Information System
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoHE	Ministry of Higher Education
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding

NEC	National Education Commission
OBE	Outcome-Based Education
ODL	Open and Distance Learning
PG	Postgraduate
PGI	Postgraduate Institute
QA	Quality Assurance
QAAC	Quality Assurance and Accreditation Council
QAC	Quality Assurance Council
SBS	Subject Benchmark Statements
SCL	Student-Centred Learning
SDC	Staff Development Centre
SER	Self-Evaluation Report
SGBV	Sexual and Gender-Based Violence
SLQF	Sri Lanka Qualifications Framework
SOP	Standard Operational Procedures
Std	Standard
ToR	Terms of Reference
UGC	University Grants Commission

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Introduction

The Manual and Its Purpose

The *Manual for Review of Sri Lankan Universities and Higher Education Institutions – 2023* is the revised version of the *Manual for Review of Sri Lankan Universities and Higher Education Institutions – 2015* (IR Manual-2015) published by the University Grants Commission. It will effectively replace the original manual from January 2023 onwards. The present manual has been formulated to provide guidance to the Universities and other Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Sri Lanka, who wish to submit themselves for reviewing under the Quality Assurance Framework of the University Grants Commission (UGC) and the Ministry of Education (MoE) in Sri Lanka. Furthermore, the manual is expected to serve as a guide for the reviewers in assessing the quality of education provision of the universities under review, and other HEIs. Despite the primary purpose of guiding Universities and other HEIs of the state sector, the manual's content is sufficiently generic in nature to permit its use for non-state HEIs as well.

This manual sets out important best practices to be adopted and respective standards to be achieved for quality assurance in higher education. It is expected to serve as a guide for universities and other HEIs to adopt and internalize good practices and standards in respect of quality assurance in education provision. In this manual, in addition to the criteria, standards and scoring system, a brief overview of quality assurance in higher education and Institutional Review has been included for the benefit of academics and administrators of universities and HEIs.

In preparation of this revised manual, experiences gained from Institutional Reviews conducted using the original manual during 2015-2019 period by the Quality Assurance Council (QAC) of the UGC in Sri Lanka, as well as the views of the university community were taken into consideration. The standards given in the revised manual were cross checked with those in the *Manual for Review of Undergraduate Study Programmes of Sri Lankan Universities and HEIs (2015)*, *Manual for Review of Undergraduate Study Programmes of Sri Lankan Distance HEIs (2019)* and *Manual for Review of Postgraduate Study Programmes of Sri Lankan Universities and Higher Education Institutions (2021)* published by the UGC, to minimize repetitions. Furthermore, an attempt was made to have near equal weightage distribution among all 107 standards.

Who will find this manual useful?

This manual has been prepared targeting the academics and administrators of universities and other HEIs as its primary audience. It will help them to periodically evaluate the quality of the education provision of their respective institutions and take necessary action for continuous quality improvement. Furthermore, it will serve as a practical guide for them to prepare Self Evaluation Report (SER) of the Institution for external review.

The manual will serve as essential reading for the members of the Centres for Quality Assurance (CQA) in the university or HEI, members of the Internal Quality Assurance Cells (IQACs)/divisions, Registrars, Directors, Vice Chancellors, and Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) of other HEIs. It will help them to initiate and promote adopting, internalizing, monitoring, and upgrading good practices and achieve specified standards of quality assurance of education provision. This manual will provide a useful guide for the external reviewers to assess the quality of the education provision of the assigned university or HEI efficiently and effectively within the given time frame and prepare a well-focused Institutional Review Report (IRR). The manual will be useful as a resource for intensive training programmes and workshops to train self-evaluation report writers and potential reviewers at national as well as at institutional level. It will serve also as a useful reference for other stakeholders such as students, parents, funding agencies in the state or private sector, international agencies, employers of graduates, professional bodies, professional accrediting agencies and policy makers. The Institutional Review Reports prepared based on this manual will enter the public domain through the website of the QAC. All stakeholders mentioned above will be able to access those reports and provide feedback to the UGC or QAC, or to the specific university or HEI on findings in the report.

How the manual is organized

This manual is divided into three Parts with an Appendix, adopting the format used in the *Manual for Review of Sri Lankan Universities and HEIs – 2015*.

Part I presents an overview of the quality assurance system in higher education and consists of two chapters. Chapter One describes the Perspectives of Quality Assurance in Higher Education while Chapter Two addresses discrete aspects of External Quality Assurance (EQA) with special emphasis on Institutional Review.

Part II consists of two chapters, Chapters Three and Four. Chapter Three presents the ‘Criteria,’ ‘Best Practices,’ and ‘Standards’ that provide the framework for determining the ‘quality of education provision of a university/HEI’ and ‘Examples of relevant evidence’. Universities and HEIs are expected to adopt and internalize these best practices to enhance quality. For each best practice one or more specific and measurable indicators are identified as ‘Standards.’ These standards describe the expected manner in which the specified ‘best practice’ should be implemented and completed or the expected level of internalization or achievement. Alongside each standard, a few ‘Examples of relevant evidence’ are indicated for the benefit of the universities/HEIs and reviewers. Chapter Four describes the procedure for using these standards to assess the performance of a study programme. Computation of the final score and assigning a grade for performance of the university/HEI are given. The universities/HEIs are expected to express their degree of internalization of the best practices in the Self Evaluation Report (SER). The reviewers are expected to objectively scrutinize evidence provided and assess the performance of the universities/HEIs by capturing the degree of internalization of best practices and the level of achievement of respective standard/s, following which they will assign a score for each standard.

The standards and the scoring system should make the evaluation transparent, enabling both the universities/HEIs and the reviewers to determine the degree of internalization of best practices and the level of achievement of the respective standard(s). The evaluation will be based on available evidence, and the subsequent assigning of a score for each standard is on a four-point scale from 0-3. In preparation of a Self-Evaluation Report and in assessing the quality of education provision and standard of awards of a university/HEI it should be borne in mind that evidence may vary among the universities/HEIs, and the evidence stated in this manual are only examples.

Part III of the manual describes the practical aspects of the review process and Institutional Review Report (IRR) which consists of three chapters, Chapters Five, Six and Seven. Chapter Five is on the Self Evaluation Report and provides detailed guidelines on the preparation of the SER for the intended review of the university or HEI, as well as the format to be used. Chapter Six is on Review Team and the Review Visit that describes the procedure adopted in the selection of peer reviewers, the composition of the review team, desired profile, attributes and the conduct of reviewers, pre-review arrangements, the review visit (site visit) and the review process. Chapter Seven on Institutional Review Report (IRR) provides guidelines for writing the IRR, which include its purpose, structure, arriving at review judgments on the overall performance of the Institution, observations, and recommendations. It also describes the procedure for submission of the report.

Appendix consists of Code of Conduct for Reviewers, Declaration of Interest for External Reviewers, and List of Participants for Stakeholder Workshops. Appendices are followed by a Glossary, a Bibliography and Notes on Authors.

Part I
Quality Assurance System in
Higher Education

Chapter One

Quality Assurance in Higher Education

Higher Education is perceived as one of the most important instruments of individual, social and economic transformation. The German philosopher, Karl Jaspers (1946) described the role of a modern university as comprising three interconnected centres, a ‘training centre’ to produce society’s professionals, a ‘research centre’ to solve its problems and a ‘cultural centre’ to provide a liberal environment for its thinkers. Jaspers envisaged the three roles merging with each other as a composite whole.

The essential functions of higher education in supporting knowledge driven economic growth and development as described in a World Bank report (2002) include

- training of high-level human resources including scientists, professionals, and technicians
- generating new knowledge through research
- accessing and adapting existing stores of global knowledge for local use
- transmission of norms, values, attitudes, and ethics necessary for constructing healthy civil societies and cohesive cultures

The mission of any modern university has to address all these functions. It has been observed, however, that some non-state HEIs may concentrate only on the first function. Unfortunately, the need for universities to provide space for the free and open discussion of ideas and values is often obscured in the pursuit of economic goals. They also need to be permitted to address topics whose long-term value to society may exceed their immediate value to students and employers and as such, the ‘quality’ of a university has to be viewed within this broader perspective.

1.1 Trends in Higher Education

There are certain global and local trends and paradigm shifts in higher education which make concerns regarding its quality more important than ever before, some of which are:

- A shift towards Outcome-Based Education (OBE) and Student-Centred Learning (SCL).
- The curriculum design process should incorporate the necessary knowledge, skills, and attitudes that a graduate needs into the curriculum, which is delivered using teaching and learning methods that facilitate student centred learning.

- Proper assessment and evaluation should ensure that the graduate has achieved the intended learning outcomes.
- A continuous process of quality improvement has to be sustained through monitoring and feedback from employers and other stakeholders.
- The impact of science, technology, and innovation on all aspects of life has increased globally.
- Achieving a better quality of life for the ordinary people in developing countries requires the collaboration of universities with the industrial sector in generating new knowledge, and in transmitting and adapting existing knowledge to suit local needs.

Conventionally, Universities and HEIs have been using the face-to-face mode of delivery to offer degree programs to full-time undergraduate students. The challenges created by the recent pandemic, however, compelled education providers to adapt distance-based modes of delivery using online platforms. The resulting lessons learned have led universities and higher education institutions to consider adapting online modes to supplement traditional face-to-face instruction even after the pandemic has subsided. As a result, higher education providers in Sri Lanka are now encouraged to incorporate blended modes in all phases of teaching, learning, and assessment, with the use of online offerings complementing traditional forms. Additionally, the demand for non-formal education is increasing. Employed adults now wish to enhance their skills and competencies which then enhance their value in a knowledge-based economy, wish to do so at their own pace and convenience. The concept of lifelong education is gaining popularity. Universities and HEIs are now beginning to offer more extension courses to nurture students, often by the open and distance mode. Universities and HEIs that are responsive to societal needs are aware of these trends and plan their courses and modify the curricula, teaching, learning and assessment strategies of the study programmes accordingly. They also make full use of their academic and technical resources to expand educational opportunities for a wider variety of students. They improve their learning environment making full use of ICT. These factors enable them to improve access without compromising equity or quality.

1.2 Concept of Quality and Quality Assurance in Higher Education

Quality Assurance is the means by which the universities can guarantee with confidence and certainty that the standard of its awards and quality of its education provision and knowledge generation are being maintained. It is a way of auditing the degree of compliance by the institution of rules, regulations and by-laws drawn up by its own Senate/Academic Board, with standards and

guidelines prescribed by the QAC Codes of Practice, SLQF, and/or professional bodies like the Sri Lanka Medical Council (SLMC) where relevant.

Universities, being public institutions, have to exercise their responsibility for maintaining quality and standards. Though this responsibility lies primarily with the institution where the power to control or change practice exists, periodic external review by an independent agency will give further credibility in the eyes of the public and satisfy social accountability, which is the basic rationale for periodic external review. However, external reviews are only one aspect of the Quality Assurance System. Before detailing its other components, it would be pertinent to briefly look at the gradual evolution of a quality-based culture within the Sri Lankan University system.

1.3 Quality Assurance in Sri Lankan Universities

The first formal discussion on Quality Assurance and Academic standards was held at a workshop on “Evaluation of University Teaching” jointly organized by the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Directors (CVCD) and UGC in September 1996. Following this workshop, the UGC requested the university councils to conduct departmental reviews with the participation of external reviewers. A committee on Quality Assurance (QA), formed within the CVCD in 2001, initiated all QA related activities such as developing the QA Handbook for Sri Lankan universities, training of a pool of reviewers for institutional and subject review, preparation of Codes of Practice and developing subject benchmarks.

The next breakthrough was the establishment of a Standing Committee and a unit for Quality Assurance and Accreditation (QAA) with a full-time QA specialist by the UGC with support from the Improving Relevance and Quality of Undergraduate Education (IRQUE) project of the Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE) and the World Bank (2003-2010). It was under the supervision of the QAA unit of the UGC, that the first cycle of Institutional and Subject Reviews were conducted using the Quality Assurance Handbook for Sri Lankan Universities. During this period subject committees consisting of senior teachers in the subject from all universities developed Subject Benchmark Statements (SBS) for almost 45 subjects/disciplines. The QAA unit was renamed the Quality Assurance and Accreditation Council (QAAC) in 2005.

Based on the experience gained and responses received from the university community during the first cycle (2004-2013) of Institutional and Subject Reviews, in 2014, the UGC and the QAAC felt the need to thoroughly revise the Quality Assurance Handbook that was used for the first cycle of

Institutional and Subject Reviews. Accordingly, a committee of senior academics prepared the *Manual for Institutional Review of Sri Lankan Universities and Higher Education Institutions*, and the *Manual for Review of Undergraduate Study Programmes of Sri Lankan Universities and Higher Education Institutions*. The Institutional Review manual provides a detailed account of the development of quality assurance activities within Sri Lankan Universities. The second cycle (2015 -2022) of Institutional Reviews and Study Program Reviews were conducted using those two manuals. The manuals introduced a new approach to institutional and study program reviews based on a measurement accrued by the reviewers for the internalization of best practices and compliance to a corresponding set of standards deriving from a list of carefully articulated criteria. The QAAC, renamed as the Quality Assurance Council (QAC) in 2016 played a pivotal role in successfully conducting 12 Institutional Reviews and 214 study Programme Reviews during the second cycle using the two manuals.

The stakeholders who actively participated in the review process also pointed out some critical areas in the review process that can be further expanded or refined. After giving due consideration to constructive feedback as such, the UGC and the QAC, appointed a committee of QA experts to revise the 2015 Manual for Institutional Review to be used for the third cycle of reviews. The present revised manual has been prepared accordingly, and with the financial support of the AHEAD Project and the World Bank.

1.4 Components of the Sri Lankan Quality Assurance System

During the past two decades, the QAC, under the aegis of the UGC. has set up a robust and comprehensive Quality Assurance system within the state university sector with the active participation of the academic community. This QA system has two main components, namely (a) the policy frameworks and policy devices; and (b) Internal and External QA mechanisms. A brief account of the two components is given below.

Policy Frameworks and Policy Devices: This component includes the Sri Lanka qualification framework (SLQF), Subject Benchmark Statements (SBS) and Codes of Practice (CoP) that serve as reference points to maintain the quality of all stages of the teaching, learning, and assessment processes. Those documents have been widely circulated among the community of academics and are accessible and freely downloadable from the QAC website (<https://www.engc.ac.lk/qac/>). For a summary of each of those components, please see Warnasuriya et. al. (2015.a, 11-13).

Internal and External Quality Assurance Mechanisms: Quality assurance is a continuous process, not a one-time event or an event only at specific intervals. The process has to be a part of the institution's continuous concern for maintaining and enhancing quality. Operationalization of IQA mechanism in state-owned universities and higher educational institutions is the responsibility of the Centres for Quality Assurance (CQA) of the respective universities and the FQACs (IQACs) of the faculties or units that are established in all state-owned universities. External quality assurance by peer review has now gained worldwide acceptance as an effective method to ensure quality and standards of education. In Sri Lanka, the mechanism is operationalized by the UGC through the QAC. State-owned universities/HEIs in Sri Lanka have completed two cycles of EQA at both institutional and study program levels, and therefore are much familiar with the processes involved. It should be noted that internal and external quality assurance are linked, and the IQA is supported by regular external reviews. The two processes have to be harmonized for maximum benefit, where the findings of one inform the other. Both are essential for maintaining and enhancing quality. The interaction between the IQA and the EQA is depicted in Figure 1.

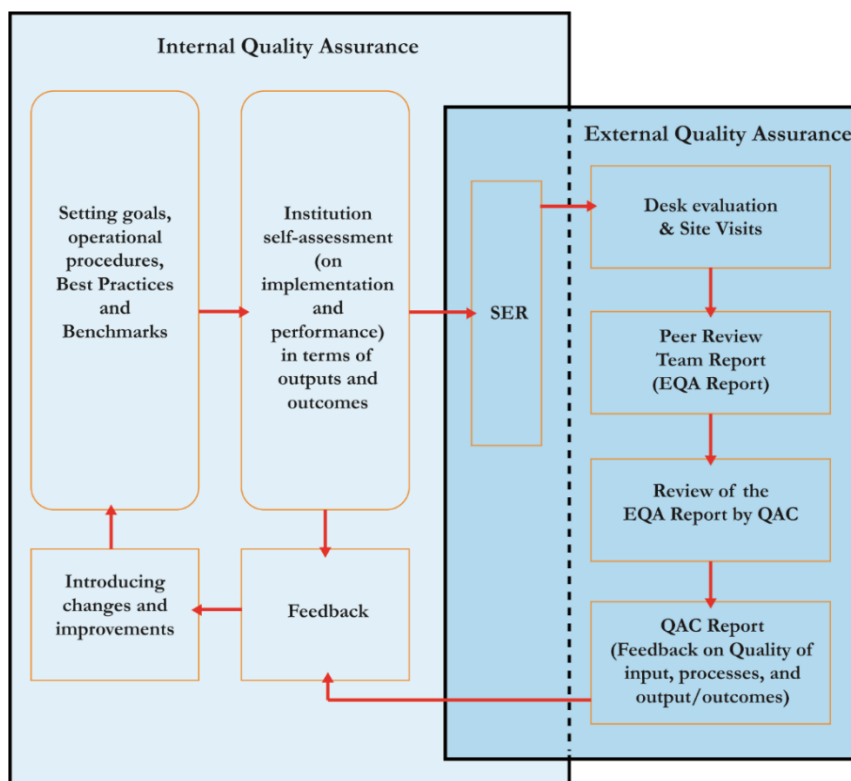


Figure 1 : Functional link between the Internal Quality Assurance and the External Quality Assurance

(Adapted from “Manual for Internal Quality Assurance for Higher Education Institutions, Ministry of Education (2008): Thailand)

1.5 Quality of Graduates

There are many individuals, especially from industry and the corporate sector who are critical of the process of quality assurance in higher education, as its focus is primarily on the process and not the product. They believe that ensuring the quality of the process does not necessarily guarantee the “fitness for purpose” of the product, i.e., the graduate. Although tracer studies and employment rates are used as proxy indicators of graduate employability, they may not be a true reflection of graduate quality due to the influence of other contextual factors. Today's higher education institutions must ensure high-quality, student-centred learning and continuous adaptation of study programmes and teaching methods to the diverse expectations of the labour market. Currently, the quality of higher education is a major issue for Sri Lanka, as the country needs highly qualified personnel who are able to adapt to the changing realities of the labour market and solve complex problems to ensure the sustainable social and economic development of the country. Currently, there is a large gap between the needs of the labour market, and the education system as the labour market is controlled by employers, who dictate the demand for HEI graduates in the labour market.

Quality assurance in higher education requires, on the one hand, the creation of conditions that promote the quality of education and, on the other hand, an objective assessment of the quality of learning outcomes and professional competencies of students and graduates. The quality of education is one of the most important components for the production of the skilled workforce. It contributes to the quality of the labour force and therefore to the increase of the country's social and economic growth.

Chapter Two

External Quality Assurance - Institutional Review

The main objectives of EQA are to safeguard the standards of awards and quality of delivery in higher education; to identify good practices; to facilitate continuous quality improvement; and to inculcate the culture of quality assurance into the higher education system. Institutional review focuses on the powers and responsibilities which universities hold for quality and standards. It is concerned with how a University/HEI assures itself and the wider public that the quality and standards it sets for itself are being achieved. Institutional review is concerned with university-wide processes, which support sound quality management and university planning in order to maintain an appropriate environment for teaching-learning, research, outreach, and other associated activities. The main features of EQA at institution level are self-evaluation, and peer review including a review visit and perusal of evidence, culminating in a review report with judgement and commentary. The *Manual for Institutional Review of Sri Lankan Universities and Higher Education Institutions* provides a detailed account of the objectives, purpose, scope, requirements, process, and the outcome of the external institutional review mechanism. Some of the main ideas of that account are summarised below for the convenience of the user.

2.1 Institutional Review – Purpose

The overall purpose of an institutional review is to achieve accountability for better quality and standards, by using a peer review process to promote the sharing of good practices and to facilitate continuous improvement. Amongst its other purposes, an institutional review:

- Analyses and tests the effectiveness of an institution's processes, and the managing and assuring of the quality of academic activities undertaken by the University/HEI.
- Evaluates the extent to which the internal quality assurance system can be relied upon to maintain the quality of education provision over time
- Focuses on the powers and responsibilities which universities hold for quality and standards.
- Is concerned with how a University/HEI assures itself and the wider public that the quality and standards it sets for itself are being achieved.

Institutional review is concerned with university-wide processes, which support sound quality management and university planning to maintain an appropriate environment for teaching, learning, research, and other activities.

2.2 Institutional Review – Scope

The scope of the institutional review introduced by Warnasuriya et. al. (2015.a) and used during the second cycle of Institutional Reviews will remain the scope of institutional review. Accordingly, the following ten criteria will form the scope of institutional review.

1. Governance and Management
2. Strength and Quality of Staff
3. Curriculum Design and Programme Development
4. Teaching-Learning
5. Learning Resources, Student Support and Progression
6. Student Assessment and Awards
7. Postgraduate Studies, Research, Innovation, and Commercialization
8. Distance Education
9. Community Engagement, Consultancy, and Outreach
10. Quality Assurance

2.3 Institutional Review – Process

The process of institutional review begins with the preparation and submission of a Self-Evaluation Report (SER) by the institution concerned to the QAC. Details of the preparation of the SER are given in Chapter 5 of the present manual, and therefore, will not be described in this chapter.

Upon the receipt of the SER, QAC will select a review team from the pool of accredited reviewers and identify one of them as the Review Chair. The review process includes desk evaluation of the SER, site visits, and reporting by the review team. The QAC will liaise all these activities. Details about the selection of the review team, appointment of the Review Chair, planning of the review visit, desk evaluation prior to site visit, execution of the review on site, and the preparation and submission of the institutional review report are given in Chapters 6 and 7 of this manual and therefore, will not be described in this chapter.

2.4 Outcome of Institutional Review

After the University/HEI accepts the Institutional Review report, it will enter the public domain through the QAC website so that all stakeholders including students, graduates, prospective employers, grant providing agencies, educationists and policymakers will have access to it. The UGC and MoHE will receive a copy through the QAC. The recommendations made by the reviewers need to be addressed by the relevant authorities including the MoHE, UGC and the University/HEI, where the most important follow up actions will be at the University/HEI itself. The relevant CQA should ensure that all faculties, departments, and support units have access to the report. Ideally, after all concerned academics, administrators and support staff have read the sections relevant to them their reactions have to be obtained in a formal manner and discussed in special meetings of the Curriculum & Evaluation committees, Faculty boards, Senate, and Council. It will be followed up with the drawing of a comprehensive follow up action and its integration into the current action plan. The CQA and other relevant committees should continue to monitor the progress in redressing defects and enhancing quality.

Part II
**Quality Assurance Framework
and Performance Assessment**

Chapter Three

Criteria, Best Practices, Standards and Sources of Evidence

For both internal and external quality assessments, transparency, objectivity, and comparability are ensured by having a framework or assessment structure against which to measure quality. The UGC-QAC, in accordance with international QA practices and procedures, has established an assessment structure with ten 'Criteria' and corresponding 'Standards' for each of the ten criteria for the institutional review of universities and HEIs. These 'Criteria' reflect the most important core aspects of HEI 's activities, which include inputs and processes that facilitate the achievement of desired outcomes and contribute to the quality of educational provision and standard of awards.

Quality assessment in higher education is a diagnostic review and evaluation of the University's/HEI's compliance with a set of best practices and the degree of attainment of the 'Standards'/Benchmarks prescribed by the UGC-QAC. A practice qualifies as a 'Best Practice' status if it has resulted in value addition to any aspect of institutional operations in a University/HEI. The 'Best Practices' are dynamic and continuous, and are the result of identification, experimentation, reflection, feedback, and innovation based on experience. They are transparent, accountable, affordable, and accessible to both staff and students, and add value to an institution. They are contextual and influenced by many factors. Best Practices show the path to success through continuous improvement leading to the benchmark of excellence.

Best practices are adopted by Universities/HEIs to improve quality and can be seen as a guideline on the path towards excellence. For quality enhancement, best practices should be internalised and become a part of the working culture of the University/HEI. To improve quality internalisation and institutionalisation is facilitated through an IQA process. Validation of the degree of internalisation and institutionalisation of best practices is achieved through an EQA process. The best practices presented here depend on many variables and contexts and are not exhaustive and are representative of the different Standards. Standards specify exactly how a task should be completed or what the results and outcomes are. The standards are to be used by reviewers to measure, quantitatively or qualitatively, the extent to which best practices have been followed and the appropriate 'Standards' achieved.

Institutional review is evidence-based. The degree of compliance with the best practices and the level of attainment in the relevant standards should be supported with relevant evidence. The judgments made by the review team emerge from collective consideration of the evidence. It should be noted that the list of evidence given in this manual are not exhaustive or prescriptive

but will rather serve only as examples. The university/HEI may present any other evidence which is deemed appropriate for a particular standard.

Brief descriptions of best practices and/or processes with respect to the ten 'Criteria' are given below. It needs to be reiterated that the best practices presented here depend on many variables and contexts and are not exhaustive. They are representative of the different Standards.

3.1 Criterion 1 - Governance and Management

Scope –Legal Acts, establishment codes, rules, regulations, national policy framework and strategies are integrated within the governance and management of the University/HEI. The University/HEI determines its own mission and objectives that reflect its values and standards, academic commitments, national needs, and international context. The University/HEI has administrative policies, procedures, appropriately qualified personnel, efficient management and administrative capacity, physical facilities, effective communication channels, financial stability, and resources adequate for effective operations and evidence-based strategic decision making. The University/HEI manages its activities in a technology-enabled way in addition to using technology as a teaching/learning resource in a student friendly non-discriminative environment.

Criterion one is captured in the following 'Standards':

(Score Guide for each standard: 0 – Inadequate, 1 - Barely Adequate, 2 – Adequate, 3 – Good)

1.1 Vision and Mission; Strategic and Action Plans

Std: The University/HEI has a sharp vision encapsulated in its Corporate Plan/Strategic Management Plan, which is in line with the National Higher Education Policy Framework and is publicly available. Its mission and goals are compatible with this vision and supported by a well-defined action plan for systematic future development within a specific time frame.

BP: Corporate Plan/Strategic Management Plan of the University/HEI is in line with the National Higher Education Policy Framework with its clearly articulated and publicly available vision and mission statements. Action plans of institutes/ faculties/ centres/ units for systematic future development within a specific time frame are in line with the Strategic Plan.

EE: Compliance of Corporate Plan/Strategic Plan with National Higher Education Policy Framework and other guidelines of MoHE, UGC and QAC; University Web; Minutes of the Strategic Management Plan Committee; Compliance of Action Plans of institutes/faculties/centres/units with university strategic plans.

1.2 Vision and Mission; Strategic and Action Plans

Std: The University/HEI's organisational structure, governance and management system are in compliance with respective acts and regulations.

BP: The University/HEI has put in place the organisational structure, the governance and management system in compliance with what is prescribed in the Universities Act No. 16 of 1978 as amended, relevant Ordinances and their amendments, University's Establishment Code, and the Circulars and Establishment Letters by the UGC and relevant ministries.

EE: Organogram with power of the positions and job responsibilities; TORs of Standing and Ad-hoc Committees; By-laws and regulations, relevant acts, and ordinances; Adoption of UGC Circulars and Establishment Letters by the HEI; Management guide; University calendar; Standard Operational Procedures.

1.3 Leadership and Inclusive Management

Std: Leadership is effective and committed to engage in participatory, systematic, and integrated planning with all relevant stakeholders, and implement the action plan to achieve the mission, goals, aims/ objectives of the University/HEI through its governance and administrative structures, policies, and procedures.

BP: Effective leadership together with well-established governing mechanisms and efficient administrative structures enable the University/HEI to fulfil its mission, goals, aims and objectives, and respond to emerging issues/trends in the educational sphere, through policy development and inclusive management.

EE: Strategic Plan/Corporate Plan; Policies and actions taken responding to emerging issues/trends; Minutes of the Planning and Development Committee, Senior Management Committee, or relevant committees; Minutes of Governing Board, Senate/Academic Syndicate, faculty/ centre/unit level meetings on formulation of action plans; Responsibilities assigned to stakeholders; Internal circulars issued.

1.4 Policy Formulation and Approval

Std: The University/HEI has established procedures for the formulation and approval of policies and by-laws through a participatory and transparent approach.

BP: University policies, and by-laws are formulated and approved through established participatory and transparent procedures.

EE: Procedure and guidelines for formulation and approval of policies; Procedure and guidelines for formulation and approval of by-laws; TOR, and composition of the Senate sub-committee for approval; Minutes of the Senate subcommittees.

1.5 Implementation and Monitoring Procedures

Std: Efficient and effective implementation, monitoring, evaluation, and reporting mechanisms are built into all activities and programmes to ensure that all institutional policies and strategies are in effect.

BP: Mechanisms and approved procedures are in place to ensure efficient implementation and effective monitoring of all institutional policies and strategies, and for university leadership to evaluate performance.

EE: Progress reports of Action Plans (KPIs) of Units/Centres/ Faculties/University; Minutes of Monitoring Committee, Senior Management Committee meetings; Relevant directives issued by the Head of the Institute; Minutes of the Council

1.6 Standard Operating Procedures and Auditing

Std: The University/HEI complies with national administrative and financial regulations as well its own pre-approved Manual of Procedures or Standard Operational Procedures (SOPs) based on principles of transparency and current practices of auditing.

BP: The administrative and financial procedures comply with the requirements of national/University/ HEI regulations and guidelines. An efficient internal audit mechanism, complemented by an external auditing process to monitor administrative and financial procedures.

EE: Manual of Administrative and Financial procedures/ SOPs; Minutes of Finance committee, Procurement Committee, Audit and Management Committees, and Council; Internal auditor report; Auditor General's Report; HEI's Reports to COPE and COPE's recommendations.

1.7 Resource Allocation

Std: The University/HEIs physical, financial, and HR allocation is explicitly and transparently linked to activities identified in the annual plans of the respective years.

BP: Managing physical, financial, and human resources form the crux of organisational management based on forecasting, planning, implementation, and monitoring.

EE: Compliance of resource allocation with UGC circulars, Administrative Regulations and Financial Regulations; Manual of Procedures/ Management Guide/ SOPs; Percentage annual allocation of physical, financial, and HRs to different activities of the strategic plan; Relevant Council minutes; Minutes of the Finance committee, Management Committee, Building and Planning Committee, Library Committees, Faculty board, PGIs, centres, units.

1.8 Procurement and Management

Std: The University/HEI has an effective and transparent system for the procurement, management, and maintenance of equipment and facilities.

BP: Effective and transparent systems for the procurement, management and maintenance of equipment and facilities are clearly stipulated in the master procurement plan of the University.

EE: Master procurement plan of the university, Fixed Assets Register; Manual of Procedures/ relevant SOPs; Minutes of Finance Committee, Procurement Committee, Technical Evaluation Committee, Maintenance Committee; Annual Board of Survey.

1.9 External Funding and Disbursements:

Std: The University/HEI has well defined guidelines and procedures that comply with national financial regulations for securing funds from external sources, and follows a transparent mechanism for the disbursement of funds.

BP: Seeking for and the receiving of funds from external sources and their disbursement is done according to well defined procedures that complies with national financial regulations.

EE: Manual of Financial procedures/ SOPs on external fund seeking, receiving and disbursements, Minutes of Finance committee, relevant council minutes; Relevant audit report.

1.10 IT for Management

Std: The University/HEI uses a current and comprehensive central management information system (MIS) for routine management.

BP: A user-friendly Central Management Information System (MIS) is in place for effective and efficient management of operations. The system is allowing information to be logically stored and easily retrieved for instant availability and for the swift execution of tasks in an efficient and cost-effective manner.

EE: ICT policy: Records of tasks covered by the University MISs; Records of the university MIS; Reports of the system administrator.

1.11 Information Security

Std: Adhering to a policy on information security, the University/HEI securely maintains, updates, and ensures confidentiality of the permanent records of all enrolled learners with accessibility to authorised persons only.

BP: The University/HEI has an effective, efficient, and securely maintained MIS with access limited only to authorised persons to ensure confidentiality, supported by policy on information security.

EE: Policy on information security; A comprehensive, and up to date MIS with data on students; Measures such as firewalls, passwords etc. used for maintaining security and confidentiality of records; Job description of the system administrator.

1.12 Work Norms

Std: The University/HEI has well defined work norms for all categories of staff and ensures that roles, responsibilities, obligations, and rights of all categories of staff are clearly specified, documented, reviewed as per UGC guidelines, and are communicated to all concerned.

BP: The responsibilities and job descriptions of all categories of staff based on UGC guidelines are clearly defined considering all aspects of work norms and workloads and are communicated to all parties concerned.

EE: University adopted work norms of staff; Minutes of relevant meetings, TORs, Manual of procedures; Records of job descriptions/ duties and responsibilities of different categories of staff given at the time of appointment; Summary reports of the workloads of relevant staff.

1.13 Accountability

Std: The University/HEI has a clearly defined code of conduct for all categories of staff emphasising the maintenance of the highest moral and ethical standards. This is to be effectively communicated to all staff at the time of appointment to the institution.

BP: All categories of staff are made aware that they must honour academic honesty and integrity, accountability, ethics, and avoid conflict of interest.

EE: Senate approved guidelines on academic honesty, integrity, accountability, conflict of interest and ethics; Relevant senate minutes and council minutes; Code of Conduct for staff, ToR given at the time of appointment; Records of induction programmes for new recruits; Staff training records.

1.14 Student Registration and Orientation

Std: The University/HEI has arrangements for registration of new students, and programmes for their orientation which make them aware of the rules and regulations of the institution, student-centred learning (SCL), outcome-based education (OBE), and technology-based learning that promotes the effective integration of new entrants to the student community and university life.

BP: Newly admitted students are made aware of rules and regulations of the institution, student-centred learning (SCL), outcome-based education (OBE), and technology-based learning to promote their effective integration to the student community and university life.

EE: Registration arrangements; Records of orientation programmes; Measures taken to promote harmony among the student community; Records of events for student integration; Calendar of events; Student handbook; Feedback of new entrants regarding orientation programme.

1.15 Disciplinary Procedures and Grievance Redressal

Std: The University/HEI has clearly defined and published disciplinary procedures and grievance redressal policy and mechanisms for all categories of staff and students.

BP: Transparent, fair, effective, and expeditious disciplinary procedures and grievance redressal policies and mechanisms are in place for all categories of staff and students the same are communicated to all concerned and implemented in adherence.

EE: Code of conduct for all the categories of staff; Student charter; By-laws on student conduct and discipline; Minutes of Disciplinary Committees; Grievance redressal policies and mechanisms; Minutes of Grievance Committee/appeals board meetings; Complaints received, and actions taken; Relevant Council minutes; Student handbooks; University website.

1.16 Internationalisation

Std: The University/HEI has an explicit policy and a framework on internationalisation that includes international student recruitment, staff/student exchange, alliances with off-shore University/HEIs, student support services, and cross- border delivery.

BP: Established mechanism is in place to encourage internationalisation through regional and international networking.

EE: Policy and a framework on internationalisation; Relevant sections of the Corporate Plan/Strategic Plan; International students' enrolment data; Staff and student exchange information; Documents on offshore delivery; Active international collaborations; Annual report.

1.17 Welfare Schemes

Std: The University/HEI has comprehensive and functional welfare schemes for all its constituents.

BP: Administration is receptive to the welfare of staff and students and has adequate welfare measures for staff and students to function optimally.

EE: Established welfare schemes (cafeteria, residential facilities, insurance, bursaries etc.); Welfare funds; Records of students and staff availing of schemes; Sample of feedback on welfare schemes and actions taken.

1.18 Security, Health, and Safety

Std: The University/HEI has comprehensive and functional policies on health & safety, security of all employees and students, and on safeguarding and protection of properties that are communicated to all stakeholders.

BP: The University/HEI is committed to guarantee the health & safety and security of all university personnel and the safeguarding and protection of property through relevant policies, as well as the communication of procedures.

EE: Policy documents on health & safety and security of university personnel, protection of properties; Health and safety guidelines issued; Safety facilities and procedures; Records of usage of university health centre; ToR issued to relevant officials; Student handbooks, hotlines; Relevant sections of the university websites.

1.19 GEE and SGBV

Std: The University/HEI has a comprehensive policy, strategies, and action plans drawn up in line with the UGC prescribed policy and strategies in order to promote GEE and deter sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV).

BP: The University/HEI strives to promote GEE and deter any form of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) amongst all categories of staff and students by adopting an appropriate policy and strategies drawn up in line with the UGC prescribed policy and strategy (on GEE and SGBV) It is spearheaded through a task force or a coordinating body with necessary empowerments and resources for effective policy implementation.

EE: Policy document on GEE and SGBV; Records on establishment of a task force/ coordinating committee; Strategies and Action Plans drawn and implemented; Minutes of the task force/coordination committee; Reports on the progress made in promoting GEE and deterring SGBV.

1.20 Ragging

Std: The University/HEI has a comprehensive policy, strategies and action plans drawn up in line with the UGC circulars to curb ragging and any other form of intimidation and harassment of students.

BP: The University/HEI adopts the policy of zero-tolerance to ragging and any form of intimidation or harassment among students, develops and adopts students' disciplinary by-laws framed according to circulars, and implements preventive and deterrent measures through a comprehensive network of academia, student counsellors, proctors, Marshalls, and security staff.

EE: Policy and Strategy documents on curbing ragging; Student disciplinary by-laws related to ragging; Mechanisms for preventing ragging and other misdemeanours; TORs of relevant academic staff, student counsellors, proctors, Marshalls, and security staff; Reports on incidents of ragging and other misdemeanours and deterrent measures taken.

3.2 Criterion 2 - Strength and Quality of Staff

Scope – The University/HEI has qualified, and competent faculty and other staff needed for the effective provision of high-quality programmes and student services. Induction and continuous professional development programmes are to be regularly organised for all categories of staff to assist in efficient and effective execution of their respective duties and responsibilities to ensure the quality of education provision and standard of awards. University/HEI facilitates faculty and staff to be innovative and creative and recognises excellence in pedagogy, research, and community engagement.

Criterion two is captured in the following ‘Standards.’

(Score Guide for each standard: 0 – Inadequate, 1 - Barely Adequate, 2 – Adequate, 3 – Good)

2.1 HR Policy and Procedures

Std: The University/HEI has a comprehensive HR policy and procedures on recruitment, retention, performance appraisal, career development, promotion, leave, grievance redressal, rewards, occupational health and safety of employees, and on avoidance of any conflicts of interest.

BP: A comprehensive HR policy that covers the recruitment of all employees, their career progression, professional development, occupational health and safety, and the avoidance any of conflicts of interest to support the achievement of mission of the university, is in place.

EE: HR policy covering recruitment, retention, performance appraisal, career development, promotion, leave, grievance, rewards, occupational health and safety of employees and avoidance of conflict of interest; University Circulars/guidelines on procedures to be adopted and criteria to be used; Relevant sections in management guide/ manual of procedures; SOPs.

2.2 Staff Recruitment:

Std: The University/HEI recruits adequate numbers of appropriately qualified staff at all levels through transparent mechanisms, as per UGC directives.

BP: Human resource planning is to form an integral part of the provision of quality education through the recruitment of appropriately qualified staff as well as the maintenance of adequate subject-wise staff to student ratio in order to ensure high quality teaching and learning.

EE: Cadre availability matched against UGC approved cadre; University/HEI's efforts to remedy the gaps; Qualification profile of existing academic/ administration/ supporting/ non-academic cadres; Retirement and succession plans; Advertisements calling for recruitments; Selection committee appointments; Implementation of the selection committee/ interview board's decisions; Complaints received on recruitments (if any) and actions taken; Annual Reports.

2.3 Resources of the Staff Development Centre

Std: The University/HEI ensures that the Staff Development Centre (SDC) is appropriately and adequately resourced.

BP: The University/HEI is committed to maintain a Staff Development Centre with necessary resources to facilitate the professional development of all categories of staff.

EE: Physical and human resources availability at the SDC; Selection criteria for SDC staff; Composition of the SDC Management Committee; ToRs of the SDC staff; Annual budget allocation for SDC; Allocation for training of various categories of staff.

2.4 Activities of the Staff Development Centre

Std: The University/HEI ensures that SDC offers well-designed training programmes including induction programmes for newly recruited staff and regular CPD programmes for all categories of staff and monitors effects on participants' performance.

BP: A well-designed induction programme and continuous professional development programmes conducted through a well-resourced Staff Development Centre addresses the needs of all categories of staff. SDC programmes regularly train, re-train, and motivate the staff for the roles and tasks they perform.

EE: Action plan of SDC based on training needs analysis; Training schedules of SDC; Induction programmes and lists of participants; Training programmes implemented for different categories of staff based on identified training needs; Records of improvement in performance of staff vis-à-vis the training programmes.

2.5 Pedagogical Training for Academic and Academic Support Staff

Std: The University/HEI ensures that academic and academic support staff are adequately trained in pedagogy focusing on OBE and SCL, and are experienced in teaching, research, and outreach activities.

BP: A mechanism and resources are in place to provide pedagogical training based on OBE and SCL to academic and academic support staff through Staff Development Centres (SDCs) or other means, and acquire experience in teaching, research, and outreach activities for academic staff.

EE: Numbers of academic and academic support staff requiring training in pedagogy; Numbers trained annually; Scholarships awarded, and numbers trained; SDC programmes on OBE-SCL conducted and numbers trained; Relevant local or overseas CPD training programmes; Numbers of academic and academic support staff trained; Teaching and research profiles of academic and academic support staff; Outreach activities of academic and academic support staff.

2.6 Administrative and Non-academic Staff Training

Std: The administrative and non-academic staff of the University/HEI are adequately trained in general administration and financial management are sufficiently experienced to carry out their responsibilities in the same.

BP: A well-designed professional development programme through Staff Development Centres or other means addresses the professional development needs of administrative and non-academic staff and regularly trains and motivates them for the roles and tasks they perform.

EE: Numbers of the administrative and non-academic staff requiring training (induction and other) in different aspects; Numbers trained annually; SDC programmes conducted, and numbers trained; Scholarships awarded, and numbers trained; Relevant local or overseas CPD training programmes and numbers administrative and non-academic staff trained; Records of activities conducted, or improvements made using the received trainings.

2.7 Mentoring Newly Recruited Staff

Std: Newly recruited staff are mentored in their career development by the senior staff and supported by the department/faculty and the University/HEI.

BP: The University/HEI ensures that all newly recruited staff are guided by relevant senior staff for their career development.

EE: Guidelines on mentoring newly recruited staff in career development; Records of departments/ faculty/ HEI assigning senior staff to guide the newly recruited staff; Relevant minutes of department meetings, faculty, HEI; Feedback from new recruits.

2.8 Training in IT skills and ICT Applications

Std: University/HEI ensures that staff are provided with necessary training to improve both their IT skills and proficiency in ICT applications that are used in their working environment, in order to increase efficiency and save resources.

BP: The University/HEI regularly provides training in IT skills and ICT applications to staff to improve their skills and increase efficiency in their work and saving resources.

EE: ICT applications used; List of IT Training programmes provided by the University; List of participants; Feedback from participants; Actions taken to save resources.

2.9 External Staff involved in Work-based or Industry Placement Training and Supervision

Std: The University/HEI has policies and mechanisms to ensure that the external staff involved in training and assessments of work-based or industry- placement assignments are appropriately qualified and sufficiently competent to perform their roles.

BP: External staff involved in work-based, or industry placement training activities are appropriately qualified and sufficiently competent to perform their roles.

EE: Procedure adopted for work-based training/ industrial placement selection and trainer selection; Criteria used to select external staff involved in work-based or industry placement training; Qualifications and profile of the external staff involved in work-based or industry placement training and assessment; Guidelines on work-based or industry-based training and assessment, Industrial placement, or work-based training record books.

2.10 Performance Appraisal

Std: Performance of all categories of staff is appraised regularly against work norms, and due recognition, incentives and rewards are given for outstanding performance in respective core duties. Correspondingly, remedial actions are taken against underperformance.

BP: Performance of staff is evaluated at regular intervals through annual self-appraisal reports, confidential performance appraisal reports, and learner feedback on teaching. The outcomes of performance evaluation are communicated to and discussed with relevant staff with the aim of improving the performance and identifying further training needs.

EE: Policy on performance appraisal of staff; Guidelines on performance appraisal; Criteria for outstanding performance; -Staff performance appraisal reports; Records on recognition and awards; Actions taken to address underperformance.

3.3 Criterion 3 – Curriculum Design and Programme Development

Scope – Academic Programmes reflect the University/HET's mission, goals, and objectives. Programmes are designed and developed based on needs assessments involving a review of existing courses and programmes, market research, industry needs, and national and regional priorities, using outcome-based approaches and student-centred learning strategies, and adhering to approved policies and procedures. There is an approved process for monitoring and reviewing programmes/courses. Adequate emphasis is given in the course design for the development of self-directed learning and lifelong learning. Courses clearly present the learning outcomes, content, teaching and learning strategies, assessment strategies, and student support approaches.

Criterion three is captured in the following 'Standards':

(Score Guide for each standard: 0 – Inadequate, 1 - Barely Adequate, 2 – Adequate, 3 – Good)

3.1 Academic Programme Design:

Std: University has a policy and mechanism to ensure that programme design and development adopts a participatory approach, and takes into consideration local and national requirements, stakeholder needs, employment market signals, international trends, UGC approved reference points such as SLQF, SBS & Codes of Practice and availability of resources.

BP: All academic programmes are developed using a participatory approach, taking into account local and national requirements, stakeholder needs, employment market signals, international trends, the availability of teaching learning resources and reference points such as SLQF, SBS & Codes of Practice.

EE: Policy and guidelines on curriculum design, development, and approval; Criteria for curriculum approval; Approved instruments (templates) for needs analysis and market survey data collection; checklists used by Faculty/ University level curriculum approval committees to ensure compliance with SBSs, SLQF, Standards prescribed by professional bodies, and availability of teaching learning resources; Minutes of relevant meetings.

3.2 Goals of Academic Programmes

Std: The University/HEI has a policy and mechanism that ensures the goals of academic programmes are in conformity with the university mission and that graduate profiles of all academic programmes are in line with the Institutional graduate profile.

BP: Goals of academic programmes are in conformity with the university mission. Graduate profiles of study programmes reflect the Institutional graduate profile.

EE: University mission and goals of academic programmes as indicated in the strategic plan; University policy and guidelines on curriculum design, development, and approval; Organisational arrangements for curriculum approval; ToR for Senate and Faculty level curriculum development committees; Graduate profile of the University/HEI; Graduate profiles of study programmes.

3.3 Published Programme Specifications

Std: The University/HEI requires every study programme to maintain a comprehensive document of ‘programme specification’ which is publicly available.

BP: Study programme specifications that are available in print and electronic forms are comprehensive and contain learner friendly descriptions of the study programme.\

EE: University approved programme specification template; Circulars/guidelines on programme specification; representative samples of study programme specifications; Website; Handbook/Prospectuses.

3.4 Application of OBE and SCL

Std: The University/HEI has a policy and mechanisms to promote outcome-based education (OBE) and student-centred learning (SCL) approaches in the design and development of curricula for all study programmes.

BP: Curricula are designed using outcome-based approach. Teaching and learning activities are congruent with student-centred learning and develop creative and critical thinking, independent and lifelong learning, and interpersonal and communication skills. Appropriate assessment methods are used to measure the attainment of ILOs.

EE: Policy and guidelines on using OBE and SCL approaches; Check lists used to ensure the use of OBE SCL approach in curriculum design; Relevant minutes of Faculty level and University level curriculum approval committees.

3.5 Supplementary Courses to Enrich Curricula

Std: The University/HEI offers supplementary courses to enrich curricula and enhance student competencies.

BP: Curricula are supplemented by incorporating quasi-professional/professional, interdisciplinary, and multidisciplinary courses offered by the University.

EE: Supplementary courses offered by the University/HEI; University/HEI circulars/guidelines on incorporating the supplementary courses; Student Handbooks; Prospectuses.

3.6 Innovation, Multidisciplinary, and Interdisciplinarity in Curriculum Design

Std: The University/HEI promotes innovation in curriculum design and development, ensures diversity and multidisciplinary/ interdisciplinarity in programmes, and allocates resources accordingly.

BP: Innovation in curriculum design and development, programme diversity, and multidisciplinary/ interdisciplinarity are promoted with allocation of necessary resources.

EE: Relevant sections of Corporate/Strategic plan; Documents issued by University/HEI promoting innovation in curriculum design and development, programme diversity, and multidisciplinary/ interdisciplinarity; Check lists; Records on allocation of resources for innovation, inclusion of interdisciplinary/multidisciplinary aspects in curricula; Minutes of relevant Council/Senate/ CDC/Awards Committee/Finance Committee meetings; Documents pertaining to rewards.

3.7 Programme Design, Development and Evaluation Regulations

Std: The University/HEI ensures that up-to-date information related to; (a). policies and principles on the basis of which study programmes are designed and developed; and (b). regulations by which the programmes are evaluated, are communicated to the stakeholders in a clear and well-structured manner.

BP: Well structured, clear, and updated information on the curriculum design and development regulations and guidelines are widely communicated across the institution.

EE: Programme design and development policies and procedures; Circulars issued; Guidelines, check lists and SOPs on programme design and development published on intranet; Programme evaluation policies and procedures, circulars issued; guidelines and checklists; Minutes of relevant Faculty level and university level committee meetings.

3.8 Credit Transfer

Std: The university/HEI has an approved published policy and mechanisms for recognition of accredited prior learning/qualifications based on SLQF, and inter-faculty and inter-institutional credit transfer.

BP: The University/HEI facilitates transfer of credits between faculties and between HEIs by recognizing accredited prior learning/qualification based on SLQF and makes this information publicly available.

EE: Approved policy and guidelines for recognition of prior learning/qualifications; Policy and regulations on credit transfer; University website; Minutes of relevant University level Academic Development/ Curriculum/ equivalent committee, Senate, and Council meetings; Records on recognition of prior learning, and the transferring of credits.

3.9 Industry-HEI Collaborations for Industrial Training

Std: The University/HEI promotes collaborations with external partners such as industry/business/state sector institutions for work-based learning or industry-placement learning based on clearly defined ILOs of the programmes of study.

BP: The University/HEI has a policy and mechanism that facilitate collaborations with external institutions for work-based learning or industry-placement learning.

EE: Policy and guidelines on work-based learning or industry placement; Council/ Senate approved proposals for educational collaborations; Relevant MOUs; Feedback from external partners.

3.10 Phasing Out Curricula

Std: The University/HEI has a policy on phasing out the curricula and facilitating transition of students to protect the academic interests of students registered for/ accepted for admission to a programme when a programme is discontinued or suspended.

BP: Academic interests of students registered / accepted for admission to a programme are protected when a programme is discontinued or suspended.

EE: Policy on phasing out curricula; Transition by laws or guidelines; Relevant section in Student Handbooks; Records of phasing out; Notifications issued; Examination timetables; Student appeals and actions taken.

3.11 Monitoring, Reviewing, and Revising Academic Programmes

Std: The University/ HEI has a policy and an internal mechanism to regularly monitor and annually review the effectiveness of academic programmes, to take appropriate action to remedy the identified shortcomings, and to revise all study programmes periodically.

BP: Regular monitoring, reviewing, and revising of the study programmes are carried out by the faculty/department/programme advisory committees, FQACs and CQA to ensure that programmes remain current and valid in the light of developing knowledge in the discipline and practice in its application.

EE: Policy, Circular and guidelines on internal monitoring and annual review, and the periodic revision of study programmes; Reporting procedures for annual internal monitoring and reviewing academic programmes; Records of identified shortcomings and remedial measures taken; FQACs/CQA reports on annual reviews/ periodic revisions of academic programmes; Relevant Faculty Board or Senate minutes.

3.12 Tracer Studies

Std: The University/ HEI has a mechanism in place for annual tracer studies on graduate employment and the effective use of the findings for programme improvement.

BP: Findings of annual tracer studies on graduate employment are used for continuous improvement of the study programmes.

EE: Records of annual tracer studies; Survey data; Records of using tracer study data for programme improvement; Employment records; Changes made in the programmes based on the findings of tracer studies.

3.4 Criterion 4 - Teaching-Learning

Scope –The teaching and learning process is student-centred, in keeping with an/the outcome-based education approach. Multiple teaching- learning methods are used to engage students actively in the learning process aligned with ILOs. Use of innovative pedagogy and continuous improvement of teaching learning strategies are encouraged.

Criterion four is captured in the following ‘Standards.’

(Score Guide for each standard: 0 – Inadequate, 1 - Barely Adequate, 2 – Adequate, 3 – Good)

4.1 Strategies and Action Plans for Student-centred Teaching-learning

Std: Strategies and action plans of the University/HEI ensure the use of student-centred learning (SCL) processes, in keeping with an/the outcome-based education approach in all study programmes.

BP: The university implements strategies to ensure student- centred teaching-learning processes grounded on outcome-based education approaches, where students learn by actively engaging in and interacting with the study material with the role of the teacher being more as a guide and facilitator and is adopted by study programmes to achieve high order learning and subject mastery.

EE: University/HEI-wide strategy and action plans to implement student-centred teaching-learning; University approved format on teaching -learning plans; Checklists on the use of SCL in study programmes; Minutes of relevant university level meetings; Training programmes conducted on student-centred teaching for staff at all levels; Student-centred teaching learning facilities developed; Approved guidelines/formats on peer observation records, Students’ feedback.

4.2 Promoting Innovative Pedagogy

Std: The University/HEI has established policy and mechanisms to promote the use of innovative pedagogy and to recognise / reward those who excel in using innovative approaches for teaching.

BP: A set of indicators are defined and used to evaluate innovative pedagogy and performance and to reward outstanding examples.

EE: Policy documents on incentives/rewards/awards for recognition of innovative teaching; Senate approved indicators/guidelines on innovative approaches to teaching and teaching excellence; Records of evaluation; Records of staff receiving such awards; University website.

4.3 Technology Enhanced Teaching-Learning

Std: The University/HEI implements a policy and procedures that encourage teachers to adopt technology enhanced teaching-learning practices, including a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) and Learning Management System (LMS).

BP: Teachers are encouraged to use technology enhanced teaching-learning practices to achieve teaching and learning goals. VLE and LMS are in place to encourage technology-enhanced teaching and learning.

EE: Policy documents and guidelines on technology-enhanced teaching-learning and the use of VLE and LMS; Relevant Senate and Council documents; Training programmes for staff on the use of VLE and LMS and technology enhanced teaching-learning / hybrid modes of teaching; LMS records.

4.4 Planning and Execution of Teaching-Learning

Std: University/HEI has a policy and mechanism to ensure that teaching-learning activities are meticulously planned and executed through teamwork and coordination amongst appropriately qualified and trained staff.

BP: The teaching-learning activities are meticulously planned and executed through teamwork and coordination. The institution ensures that the staff is appropriately qualified and trained.

EE: Relevant sections in university policy and mechanism on the planning and execution of teaching and learning; Manual of procedures; University circulars; Qualifications and experience of academic staff; Samples of teaching plans.

4.5 Peer and Student Review of Teaching

Std: The University/HEI has a policy and mechanism to ensure regular peer and student review of teaching and to provide feedback to the teacher for self-improvement.

BP: Student and peer assessment of teachers are used for the improvement of teaching skills, methods, and performance.

EE: Policy document on peer evaluation and student feedback on teaching; University guidelines on peer selection, peer evaluation procedure, and student feedback; Documents on the appointment of peers; University approved peer evaluation forms and student feedback forms; Records on improvements made in teaching and learning in response to peer evaluation or student feedback.

4.6 Teacher Guided Peer Study Groups

Std: The University/HEI facilitates collaborative learning and knowledge/skill sharing through teacher guided peer study groups in order to promote the development of necessary competencies.

BP: The practice among students in the formation of teacher guided peer study groups in order to encourage team-learning and the sharing of knowledge & skills.

EE: University approved guidelines on teacher guided peer study group formation; Facilities available for teacher-guided peer group activities; Records on the use of facilities for teacher-guided peer group activities; Student satisfaction data on facilities/opportunities given.

4.7 Continuous Enrichment of the Course Contents and Improvement in Teaching-learning

Std: The University/ HEI supports academic staff to enrich course content and teaching-learning strategy with recent advances in research and published literature, and to establish linkages with national, regional, and international networks to share the best practices in teaching-learning strategies.

BP: The University/HEI considers quality as a strategic objective and is committed to fostering the continuous enrichment of the contents of its courses in addition to improvement in teaching-learning. It engages in national, regional, and international networks to share the best practices in teaching-learning strategies.

EE: University circulars or guidelines on enrichment of content and teaching learning strategies with recent advances in the field, Records on enriching course contents or teaching learning strategies; Records on actions taken to identify gaps in existing curriculum and corrective measures for improvement; Established linkages for sharing best practices in teaching-learning strategies.

4.8 Use of Diverse Teaching-learning Methods

Std: The University/HEI ensures the use of diverse teaching learning methods that are aligned with the intended learning outcomes in order to engage all learners in the learning process to achieve the desired outcomes.

BP: Diverse teaching and learning methods are used to engage students actively in the learning process that are also aligned with ILOs. Linkages with national, regional, and international networks are established to share best practices in teaching-learning strategies.

EE: University Guidelines on the use of diverse teaching learning methods aligned with intended outcomes; Training programmes on aligning teaching-learning with ILOs; Approved formats for curriculum design.

4.9 Students with Special Needs

Std: University/HEI has policies and mechanisms to ensure that teaching-learning and assessment strategies provide equal opportunities for students with special needs.

BP: Teaching-learning and assessment strategies provide equal opportunities for students with special needs.

EE: Policy and guidelines on teaching-learning and assessment for students with special needs; Number of students with different special needs, Teaching-learning and assessment strategies used to accommodate students with special needs; Feedback from students with special needs on facilities and opportunities.

3.5 Criterion 5 – Learning Resources, Student Support and Progression

Scope – The University/HEI has adequate and appropriate infrastructure and library facilities for the required mode and type of teaching and learning and for the required number of students to conduct quality academic programmes. The University/HEI/Faculty/Department facilitates the use of technological innovations in educational transactions to enrich the learning experiences it provides to students. Students are supported adequately by provision of a range of opportunities for tutoring, mentoring, counselling, and extracurricular activities, and career guidance to facilitate their holistic progression.

Criterion five is captured in the following ‘Standards.’

(Score Guide for each standard: 0 – Inadequate, 1 - Barely Adequate, 2 – Adequate, 3 – Good)

5.1 Infrastructure Facilities for Teaching-Learning

Std: The University/HEI provides and maintains adequate, appropriate, and accessible infrastructure facilities to support teaching- learning activities and employs user surveys for the monitoring and improvement of such provisions.

BP: The availability of adequate and well-maintained infrastructure facilities including lecture theatres, ICT centres, laboratories, and language laboratories for the support of OBE SCL and the effective execution of each programme is ensured.

EE: Available infrastructure facilities (laboratories, lecture theatres, IT centres etc.); Facilities for practising OBE SCL, LMS; University/HEI Annual Budget estimates for infrastructure; Records of financial disbursement for respective program budgets for infrastructure development; Student and staff feedback on infrastructure for teaching-learning.

5.2 Library Staff and Resources

Std: The University/HEI provides adequate financial and physical resources as well as appropriately qualified and experienced staff in its main library and branch libraries to maintain a wide and continually updated collection as well as state- of-the-art educational resources, also catering to the needs of its users

BP: The University/HEI recognizes the library as a key component in assuring the quality of its education provision by providing the necessary resources to expand and update its collection. It has qualified, experienced, knowledgeable, and trained staff. It maintains adequate financial and physical resources, and space availability for future expansion.

EE: University fund allocation for the library; Records of fund utilisation; Inventory of the collection including the archives; Records of new acquisitions and subscription renewals; Number of qualified and trained library staff, List of physical resources; Annual report, Action plan for the library; Minutes of Library Committee meetings.

5.3 ICT-led Tools and Facilities for the Library:

Std: The University/HEI library and its branches use ICT-led tools to facilitate the students in accessing and using information effectively for academic success, research, and lifelong learning.

BP: A fully automated, networked, and user-friendly library system is in place thereby making it an information resource centre.

EE: Provision of e-resources, facility for Internet access; ICT equipment supplied to the Main Library to maintain an effective automated environment; Digital collections, ICT-based tools, Library training/ orientation schedules; Services for learners; User records and user surveys; Minutes of Library Committee meetings.

5.4 Learner Resources for IT

Std: The University/HEI provides adequate learning resources for the ICT centre with qualified staff and adequate financial allocations for continuous improvement.

BP: Students are provided with well-equipped computer centres, network infrastructure, qualified staff, and financial allocation for ICT.

EE: List of available learning resources including authentic software and financial allocations for ICT; Recruitment criteria for ICT staff; Records of ICT usage; Student satisfaction survey data on ICT learning resources; records on the use of findings of student satisfaction surveys for continuous improvement.

5.5 Learner Resources and Services for Teaching English as a Second Language

Std: The University/HEI maintains a well-equipped unit or facility with qualified staff and necessary resources including language laboratories for teaching English as a second language, and to be committed to make improvements as necessary.

BP: Students are provided with necessary learning resources such as well-equipped language laboratories, study materials, and are supported by qualified staff.

EE: List of available learning resources for English; Recruitment criteria for contractual staff for English; Records of available English learning resources usage; Records of student achievements in English language at national and international-level; Student satisfaction survey data on English learning resources and services; Records on the use of findings of student satisfaction surveys for the continuous improvement of learning resources and services for English.

5.6 Learner Resources for Extra-curricular Activities

Std: The University/HEI promotes extra-curricular activities by providing, maintaining, and improving facilities for sports, recreation, and cultural & creative activities with adequate physical, human and financial resources.

BP: Students are provided with facilities for sports, recreation, cultural and creative activities.

EE: Financial allocation for extra-curricular activities; List of available facilities for extra-curricular activities; Records of usage; Records of national and international physical and human resources/achievements on extracurricular activities; Student satisfaction survey data on extra-curricular facilities; Records on the use of findings of feedback surveys for the continuous improvement of extracurricular facilities.

5.7 Resources and Services for Students with Special Needs

Std: The University/HEI provides appropriate learning resources, academic support services, delivery strategies, guidance, and infrastructure facilities to meet the needs of students with special needs.

BP: Inclusive student support system (academic and infrastructural) is in place to meet the needs of all the registered students.

EE: List of available learning resources and support services for students with special needs; Available infrastructure facilities for students with special needs; Records of identified needs of students with special needs and the provision of support and services; Analysed data on user feedback.

5.8 Mentoring, Academic Advisory and Counselling

Std: The University/HEI provides student-centred academic advisory, mentoring, counselling, or equivalent services to support the academic, social, psychological, and personal development of all students, promoting social harmony and ethnic cohesion.

BP: The University/HEI promotes student-centred academic advisory, mentoring, counselling, or equivalent services to support the academic, social, psychological, and personal development of all students and facilitate activities that encourage social harmony and ethnic cohesion.

EE: Available student support services including mentoring, academic advisory, and counselling programmes; Duties and responsibilities of the officers providing each service; Qualifications and training of psychological counsellors; Action plans and records of activities conducted by each programme; Student satisfaction surveys and analysed data.

5.9 Career Guidance

Std: The University/HEI strives to improve the employability of its graduates by providing a comprehensive career guidance service designed to assist students in making and implementing informed educational and occupational choices.

BP: All students are guided in making informed educational and occupational choices, and in becoming graduates who meet societal/labour market expectations.

EE: List of services provided by career guidance unit; Duties, and responsibilities of the career guidance unit staff; Action plan of CGU; Records of activities conducted; Actions taken to help improving employability of graduates; Records of student participation; Student satisfaction surveys on CGU activities and analysed data.

5.10 Student Helpdesk

Std: The University/HEI has a systematic student support mechanism linked with a helpdesk that responds promptly to all student enquiries.

BP: A student-friendly support system, physical or online, is in place to respond to student inquires on programmes, admissions, the academic calendar, fees and dues, avenues for financial support, scholarships, examination system, graduation etc.

EE: Helpdesk or dedicated hotline for student support; Records of the helpdesk; Log records of online help service; Student Handbook, Guidebooks, and Brochures/prospectus; Web site with FAQs & date of last updating; ToR of the Student Services Division or equivalent unit; Job descriptions of relevant staff; Students' feedback on Helpdesk or dedicated hotline.

5.11 Information on Learning Resources and Learner Support Services

Std: The University/HEI provides updated information on learning resources and learner support services through the LMS, Handbooks, Prospectus, and Websites, and makes such services accessible to all registered students.

BP: Updated information on learning resources and learner support services are made available to all registered students.

EE: LMS; Handbooks, Prospectus, and Websites; Print information package distributed at the commencement of the programme; Updated information (if any); Analysis/ summary of student feedback on information provided regarding learning resources.

5.12 Student Progression

Std: The University/HEI has put in place the policies, practices, systems, and opportunities that facilitate learners' progression from one stage of a programme to another for qualifying for an award.

BP: Academic progression of a registered learner from admission to graduation or (where necessary) early exit/fallback options is facilitated.

EE: Policy document on learner progression; Guidelines on facilitating learner progression; Student Handbook; Examination by laws; Graduate feedback on the support system for academic progression; Data on completion rate.

3.6 Criterion 6 – Student Assessment and Awards

Scope – The University/ HEI employs effective assessment systems, both during and at the end of the course, that reflect academic standards and measure the achievement of learning outcomes for individual programmes/courses through the use of diagnostic, formative, intended and summative types of assessment. The university/ HEI ensures that the principles, procedures, and processes of all assessments are clear, fair, transparent, valid, and consistent while ensuring their confidentiality and integrity.

Criterion six is captured in the following 'Standards.'

(Score Guide for each standard: 0 – Inadequate, 1 - Barely Adequate, 2 – Adequate, 3 – Good)

6.1 Assessment Policies and Regulations

Std: University/HEI has explicit policies and regulations on assessing students using published criteria, regulations, and procedures, supplemented by the involvement of staff who have received appropriate training and have no conflicts of interest.

BP: Students are assessed using published criteria, regulations, and procedures. Staff involved in the assessments of students are competent to undertake their roles and have no conflicts of interest.

EE: University examination policy and By-laws in effect as per UGC Circulars; University Manual of examination procedures; University rules and regulations governing student assessments; Students' Handbook; University website; Induction and CPD programmes for

the staff; Code of conduct for examiners, Annual declaration of Relevant sections in ‘no conflicts of interest;’ ToR template for Examiners.

6.2 Student Assessment Strategies and Awards

Std: The University/HEI has an approved policy and established procedures for designing, approving, implementing, monitoring, and periodic reviewing of the assessment strategies for programmes and criteria for awards.

BP: Designing (setting, moderating, marking, grading), approving, implementing, monitoring, and periodic reviewing of assessment methods and determination of criteria for awards are based on approved policy and procedures. The institution provides periodic reports on academic performance to the Senate and Council.

EE: University Examination policy; Examination by-laws; Manual of examination procedures; Rules and regulations on setting, moderating, marking, grading, approving, implementing, monitoring, and periodic reviewing of assessment methods; Criteria for awards; Minutes of relevant meetings.

6.3 Integrating Assessment into Teaching-learning

Std: The University/HEI has policies and mechanisms to ensure that all courses/modules in study programmes integrate assessment methods into teaching-learning strategies.

BP: Assessment methods are integrated with teaching learning strategies.

EE: Relevant section in policy on curriculum design; Relevant section in University Manual of examination procedures; Curriculum approval guidelines/checklists; Relevant Senate/curriculum development committee documents; Samples of curricula showing assessment integrated with teaching-learning strategies.

6.4 Appointment of Examiners

Std: The University/HEI has an approved policy and established mechanism to ensure the appointment of suitably qualified examiners, paper setters, external moderators, and the use of first marking and independent second marking in examinations.

BP: Appointment of suitably qualified examiners and the use of first marking and independent second marking in examinations are practiced as essential parts of the process of quality control and maintenance of standards.

EE: Policy and regulations on the appointment of examiners for first marking and second marking; Relevant sections in Manual of examination procedures; Sample TORs of examiners; Examiners’ reports; Relevant Senate minutes.

6.5 Moderation and Second Marking

Std: The University/HEI has an approved policy and established mechanism to ensure the moderation of all examinations and the incorporation of external moderators’ comments and second marking.

BP: Moderation of the question papers, incorporation of external moderators’ comments and second marking are essential parts of the process of quality control and maintenance of assessment standards.

EE: Relevant section in Manual of examination procedures; Relevant Senate minutes; Sample TORs of paper setters and moderators; Records of incorporating moderators’ comments; Records of scrutiny boards.

6.6 Confidentiality of Assessment and Assessment Decisions

Std: The University/HEI has a mechanism to ensure that Examination boards and panels make assessment decisions with due consideration to academic standards. Those decisions are documented accurately and systematically, maintaining security and confidentiality of information.

BP: Assessment decisions are made with due consideration to academic standards; those decisions are recorded accurately and systematically, maintaining security and confidentiality of information.

EE: Relevant circular or guidelines on making assessment decisions; Relevant sections in Manual of examination procedures; Procedures in place to maintain the confidentiality and security of assessment decisions; Designated confidential locations with access only for authorised personnel.

6.7 Feedback on Assessments and Release of Results

Std: University/HEI ensures provision of appropriate and timely feedback on formative assessments to students enabling them to monitor their progress as well as and timely release of the results of all summative evaluations.

BP: Appropriate feedback is provided in time, helping students monitor their progress and results are released within a stipulated time.

EE: University policy on formative and summative assessments, providing feedback and release of results; Relevant sections of Manual of Examination procedures; Examination by-laws; Summary records on the dates of conducting assessments, evaluations, and releasing results; Records on providing feedback on formative assessments.

6.8 Disciplinary Procedures

Std: Disciplinary procedures for handling examination malpractices such as copying, plagiarism, impersonation, and violation of code of conduct are in place and timely enforced.

BP: Assessment regulations are enforced, and disciplinary procedures are in place for handling breaching of examination regulations by students.

EE: By-laws on examination offences; Relevant section in Manual of Examination Procedures; Students Handbook; University website; Records of responses to examination malpractices including plagiarism, copying, impersonation and violation of code of conduct; Minutes of the relevant university examination committees, Senate, and Council.

3.7 Criterion 7 – Postgraduate Studies, Research, Innovation, and Commercialization

Scope – Research influences teaching at all levels. Postgraduate degrees are primarily research based or professionally oriented. Ethical aspects of research are adequately addressed. Systematic and transparent monitoring and assessment mechanisms are in place to ensure students' progress. Research, consultancy, and extension services are actively promoted to build linkages with industry, business, community, and public organisations which foster close relationships between the world of work and learning for the students. The University/HEI has adequate infrastructural, administrative and financial mechanisms for research and postgraduate studies. The University/HEI generates new knowledge through research in conjunction with other stakeholders, such as the industry. University/HEI is able to attract competitive research funding nationally and globally. The findings of research are published in indexed peer reviewed journals. Innovations are promoted and, where relevant, patents are acquired, and commercialisation is facilitated.

Criterion seven is captured in the following ‘Standards.’

(Score Guide for each Standard: 0 – Inadequate, 1 - Barely Adequate, 2 – Adequate, 3 – Good)

7.1 Recognition for PG Education, Research, Innovation, and Commercialization

Std: The University/HEI recognise postgraduate training, research, innovation, scholarship, and commercialization as important functions as reflected in the university policies, strategic plan, and organisational structure.

BP: Research, innovation, and publication are recognized as core duties of academic staff in addition to teaching. Commercialization of innovations is encouraged. Regulations on the establishment of relevant units to facilitate PG education, research and commercialization are in place.

EE: University policies on postgraduate studies, research, innovations, and commercialisation; Relevant sections of the Strategic Plan and Action Plan of the university; Organogram; Institutional regulations on the establishment of institutes or units for postgraduate education and introduction of PG courses or programmes; Regulations on establishing Research Council or similar units; Regulations on establishing Business linkages and commercialisation of research innovations; Proposals submitted for establishing PGIs or FGS for Senate approval.

7.2 Postgraduate Education By-laws and PGIs/FGSs

Std: The University/HEI has established by-laws, regulations, discipline specific guidelines (where relevant) and institutes or equivalents for the award of PG qualifications and are made available to relevant stakeholders.

BP: Institutional regulations regarding both postgraduate taught courses and research degree programmes are made available through the university website or Graduate Prospectus.

EE: By-laws and regulations for the award of postgraduate qualifications; List of PG Institutes, FGS or Departments and respective programmes; Degree programmes and discipline specific by-laws and guidelines (if any); Graduate prospectus; University website.

7.3 QA of PG Programmes

Std: The University/HEI has in place a mechanism that monitors the performance of postgraduate programmes against a Senate approved set of indicators of quality and provides directives for improvement.

BP: The performance of postgraduate programmes is monitored to ensure their fitness for purpose.

EE: Senate approved Indicators of the quality of PG programmes (number of applications received, number admitted, minimum number of students for programme, numbers exit at distinct levels, dropout rate, actual duration of study, graduation rate etc.); Procedure adopted for internal quality monitoring by IQAC; Directives given to improve performance; Relevant CQA and IQAC Management Committee minutes; Senate minutes.

7.4 Promoting Research Culture

Std: The University/HEI ensures a conducive environment and mechanisms to promote research culture and research excellence within the institution complemented by a stated code of conduct and ethical practices in research.

BP: The institution facilitates a conducive environment that enables students to interact with academics and peers and promotes research culture through establishing research centres/committees and offering incentives and rewards to those who excel in research, innovations, and dissemination, which is complemented by a stated code of conduct and ethical practices in research.

EE: Institutional procedures and guidelines on promoting research culture; University research centres and committees; Learning and research facilities or tools; Activities conducted to promote research culture; Relevant minutes of the university research committee meetings and Ethics Review Committee (ERC) meetings; Records of facilitating academics to obtain research grants; Postgraduate research grants and travel grants (research) awarded to academics; Records on provision of seed money for research; Records on recognition of research excellence and innovation, awarding of incentives; List of annual research awards, and recipients.

7.5 Continuous Research Training for Faculty

Std: University/HEI has a policy and mechanism to provide access to research training programmes for academic staff and researchers to help develop a range of research skills as well as to organise and participate in national and international seminars and workshops on research.

BP: Opportunities are provided within and outside the institution for research skills development among academic staff and researchers and the participation and organisation of national and international seminars and workshops on current research are facilitated to rejuvenate the faculty with fresh inputs of global knowledge.

EE: University policy on research training; Relevant Minutes of the university research committee/centre/council; Records of research training programmes facilitated; Records of attendance and utilisation of developed skills; Participant feedback obtained, and actions taken.

7.6 Applied Research

Std: The University/HEI facilitates the harnessing of applied research into practice by establishing links or collaborative arrangements with both the industry and wider society through provision of incentives, rewards, and recognition in the public domain.

BP: Encouragement and motivation to harness research into practice are made possible by interaction with the industry and wider society and through providing suitable incentives, awards, rewards, and recognition in the public domain.

EE: Details of research incubators/applied research facilities established and annual reports; Signed agreements and MOUs with industries; Records of incentives, awards, rewards, and recognition for harnessing research into practice.

7.7 Dissemination and Publication of Research

Std: The University/HEI implements a publication policy that includes authorisation procedures, authorship criteria, guidance on affiliation, acknowledgments on institutional contribution, and the selection of referred/indexed journals, and encourages dissemination and research publications in referred /indexed journals.

BP: University/ HEI encourages dissemination and research publication in refereed/indexed journals giving due recognition to respective authors and affiliations.

EE: Research publication policy; University guidelines or circulars on research dissemination; Records on research conferences, symposia and workshops conducted; List of publications; Authorship of publications; Relevant minutes of university research committee; Records of financial and other support for research dissemination and publication.

7.8 Innovation, Commercialization, and IPR

Std: The University/HEI has policies, institutional arrangements, and procedures for research innovation, commercialization, securing IPR, and supporting the acquisition of patents.

BP: Innovation and commercialization are encouraged. Securing IPR including the obtaining of patents is supported.

EE: University/HEI policy on innovation, commercialization, and IPR; Guidelines on IPR/patent application procedure; Past patent applications; Lists of received patents and patent holders; Institutional arrangement and strategy for start-ups and commercialisation; Guidelines on start-ups and commercialization; Staff training programmes on finances and entrepreneurial skills; Partnership agreements with exit strategies; Project monitoring/litigation procedures; List of commercialised products and relevant budgets; Minutes of relevant committees; Annual Reports.

7.9 Academic and Research Collaborations and Partnerships

Std: The University/HEI ensures that collaboration or partnerships with local, national, regional, and international organisations to share knowledge, expertise, human resources, services, and research are based on a sound policy with criteria for monitoring and evaluation.

BP: Collaborative arrangements for academic and research cooperation are negotiated, agreed upon, and managed in accordance with clearly stated policies and procedures of the respective institutions.

EE: University/HEI policy, guidelines, and procedures on academic and research collaborations/partnerships; Criteria for monitoring and evaluation; Council approved MOUs or agreements; Minutes of monitoring committee on implementation of MOUs or agreements; Records of joint publications and exchanges of human resources.

7.10 Creative Works

Std: The University/HEI has published policies, by-laws, and implementation mechanisms on standards and guidelines used for producing, assessing, and disseminating creative works.

BP: Creative works of students and teachers are, assessed, and disseminated according to approved policies and by-laws through established mechanisms that are effectively communicated.

EE: University/HEI policies and by-laws, guidelines, and criteria on creative works; Implementing mechanisms; University website; Lists of creative works produced, assessed, and disseminated.

7.11 Discouraging Conflicts of Interest

Std: The University/HEI implements a published policy discouraging potential conflicts of interest with respect to the provision of postgraduate training, research, innovation, and commercialisation.

BP: A suitable mechanism is in place to avoid potential conflicts of interest with respect to the provision of postgraduate training, research, innovation, and commercialisation, and is communicated to relevant stakeholders.

EE: University/HEI policy guidelines and procedures on avoiding conflicts of interest in PG training, research, innovation, and commercialisation; University circulars or instructions issued to stakeholders; Conflict of Interest declaration forms for postgraduate Supervisors, Examiners and Teaching panel members; TORs of researchers; University website; Relevant minutes of committees such as PG Boards, university research council, UBL cells, Technology Transfer Office etc, on adopting the policy or guidelines.

7.12 Postgraduate Supervision

Std: The University/HEI has established procedures to ensure the appointment of suitably qualified and experienced faculty members, who can allocate sufficient time to guide and supervise postgraduate students.

BP: Supervisors appointed for postgraduate student supervision have the appropriate skills and subject knowledge to support, encourage, and monitor students effectively. The volume and range of responsibilities assigned to individual supervisors should not compromise the quality of supervision. The supervisory role is clearly defined, and mechanisms to conduct formal reviews of student progress are established.

EE: Criteria for the appointment of postgraduate supervisors; ToR for supervisors; Guidelines on postgraduate student supervision; Instructions to postgraduate students on their responsibilities.

3.8 Criterion 8 – Distance Education

Scope –Programmes are delivered through open and distance learning (ODL) methods in order to offer educational opportunities to students who are unable to enter the conventional system. The University/HEI places great emphasis on the consistency, continuity, and integrity of the learning environment in question. All academic programmes/courses are taught by regular faculty and/or approved adjunct faculty or approved external training University/HEIs and adhere to the same standards and requirements as identical courses conducted through face to face. Regardless of the delivery format, learning is the primary aim with achievement of stated programme learning outcomes as the primary assessment measure.

Criterion eight is captured in the following ‘Standards’

(Score Guide for each standard: 0 – Inadequate, 1 - Barely Adequate, 2 – Adequate, 3 – Good)

8.1 Distance Education Provision:

Std: Open and distance learning (ODL) programmes offered by the University/HEI are consistent with its mission and a policy that is in alignment with UGC Circulars on External Degrees and Extension Programmes.

BP: The Corporate/Strategic plan provides the foundation for all distance learning policies, procedures, and activities. University/HEI’s management and administration ensure that the distance learning programmes/courses meet the objectives and mission of the institution and UGC directives.

EE: University mission, policy, and corporate plan reflecting compliance with relevant and current UGC Circulars; List of current External Degree Programmes and Extension Courses along with their dates of inception.

8.2 Engaging External Partners

Std: The University/HEI has policies, procedures, and systems in place for the assurance of academic quality, operational efficiency, financial sustenance, and strategic relevance of the programmes offered by local or off-shore external partner training institutions.

BP: The University/HEI is committed to ensuring the quality of programmes offered by external partner training institutions.

EE: University policy documents on external partner training institutions; Guidelines on assurance of academic quality, operational efficiency, financial sustenance, and strategic relevance; Relevant Senate minutes; MOUs or agreements with partner institutions; CODL Management Committee minutes.

8.3 Dedicated Centre for ODL

Std: The University/HEI offers ODL programmes through a CODL or equivalent unit in alignment with the policy framework and guidelines issued by the UGC.

BP: A central unit and an effective mechanism are in place to offer ODL programmes adhering to the guidelines of the UGC.

EE: By-laws of CODL; Manual of Procedures for CODL; Records on student enrolment and graduation; Records on performance of students and graduates produced through EDPs; Feedback from students and graduates on CODL.

8.4 Admission of Students

Std: The University/HEI adheres to relevant UGC Circulars on admission of students to EDP-ODL programmes.

BP: Students are admitted to EDP-ODL programmes in accordance with nationally accepted guidelines.

EE: Compliance of University guidelines on admission of students to EDP-ODL programmes with current and relevant UGC Circulars; Records of transparent and consistent application of admission criteria; Relevant CODL minutes, Senate minutes on numbers admitted to each EDP.

8.5 Staff Training and Delivery

Std: The University/HEI has policies, guidelines and mechanisms addressing ODL-specific staff training, the sharing of instructional responsibilities amongst staff, effective teaching using ODL methods, and time spent for course development, delivery, and monitoring.

BP: Orientation and training are provided to faculty in ODL pedagogy and faculty is evaluated for effectiveness in teaching-learning. It ensures provision of quality EDPs without compromising the quality of internal programmes or overloading staff involved.

EE: Guidelines on work norms and workload with respect to faculty involved in teaching both on campus and EDP students; Work Norms that indicate time spent on EDP course development, delivery, and monitoring; Records of ODL-specific staff training, Records on the use of ODL for EDP teaching.

8.6 Availability of Resources

Std: The University/HEI ensures the availability of sufficient human & physical resources and self-financing to sustain the dedicated center and the programmes.

BP: Adequate and appropriate human resources and physical learning resources (library, computer, and internet facilities, English language laboratories etc.) are made available. Academic support may be provided by part-time tutors and full-time academic staff. Adequate tutor: student ratio for each programme is maintained. Judicious budgeting of the programmes ensures the sustainability of EDP-ODL.

EE: University guidelines on human and physical resource availability and self-financing of CODL; Action plan of CODL; CODL staff requirements and available staff with qualifications and experience; List of contractual tutors, counsellors, and advisors with TORs; List of available physical resources; field centres/ETIs for EDP students; Budget and Financial Statement of EDP programmes; EDP student feedback on available resources.

8.7 Learner Support Services

Std: The University/HEI ensures provision of adequate learner support services to enable learners to achieve the presupposed educational outcomes of programmes through Distance Education.

BP: Learner support of services are provided by qualified staff, counsellors, and advisors. Services are available to enable students to achieve their educational outcomes.

EE: Learner support services available; Records of tutoring; Tutor: student ratio; List of academic advisors and counsellors; Number of supervising sessions where relevant; Feedback on learner support services.

8.8 Accessibility to Learning Resources

Std: The University/HEI ensures accessible and appropriate learning resources for external students within or outside its domain.

BP: Learning resources and instructional materials for ODL are appropriate, and accessible. Clearly defined procedures and processes are available to evaluate the appropriateness and accessibility of the resources and services for students in distance learning.

EE: Notifications on access to learning resources to external students; Records of EDP students' utilisation of learning resources such as library, computer, and internet facilities, LMS, English language laboratories etc.; Records on training of EDP students to use online learning resources; EDP student feedback on learning resources.

8.9 Recognition of External Qualifications

Std: The University/HEI supports the parity of esteem of both internal and external degree programs. Certification of qualifications and awards makes no distinction between discrete modes of study.

BP: Programmes/courses of study and qualifications offered through distance learning methods are comparable to similar internal degree programmes/courses.

EE: Compliance with Policy/Circulars/instructions on parity of esteem; Comparison of internal and external degree programmes leading to the same qualification; Samples of Internal and external degree certificates issued.

8.10 Ownership of Learning Materials

Std: The University/HEI ensures the establishment and implementation of policies on ownership of learning materials and protection of copyrights.

BP: Clear policies and ownership of instructional materials and protection of copyrights are in place.

EE: Policy and procedures for production of learning materials both in house and by external experts; Policy on ownership and IPR; Samples of copyright protected materials; IP licences received; Records of authorisations received to use copyrighted material.

3.9 Criterion 9 – Community Engagement, Consultancy, and Outreach

Scope – The University/HEI is responsive to the needs of the community and supports community outreach by providing consultancy and extension services. Continuous encouragement of faculty to offer consultancy not only builds up the reputation of the faculty but also helps in augmenting institutional image and social acceptance while providing new areas for research.

Criterion nine is captured in the following ‘Standards’:

(Score Guide for each standard: 0 – Inadequate, 1 - Barely Adequate, 2 – Adequate, 3 – Good)

9.1 Policy on Community Services

Std: The University/HEI has a policy and strategy to foster, promote, monitor, and evaluate community services.

BP: Reflecting in its mission, there is a community service policy with a clear link to the goals and objectives of the strategic plan, and procedures for their implementation, monitoring, and improvement.

EE: Policy document; Relevant section in the Strategic Plan; Institutional procedures on linkages with community; Relevant Senate and Council minutes promoting linkages with the community; Monitoring, and evaluation records of community services undertaken; Community feedback.

9.2 Policy on Consultancy Services

Std: The University/HEI has a policy and strategy to foster, promote, monitor, and evaluate consultancy services provided to the industry and community.

BP: Reflecting in its mission, there is a consultancy service policy and procedures with a clear link to the goals and objectives of the strategic plan.

EE: Policy document; Relevant section in the Strategic Plan; Institutional procedures on providing consultancy services; Relevant web page; Relevant Senate and Council minutes promoting consultancy services; Monitoring and evaluation records of consultancy services undertaken; Records of UBL cell or similar entities on consultancy services; Client feedbacks.

9.3 Policy on Technology Transfer

Std: The University/HEI has a policy and strategy to foster and promote, monitor, and evaluate technology transfer services to build linkages with industry and community.

BP: Reflecting in its mission, there is a Technology Transfer policy with a clear link to the goals and objectives of the strategic plan, and procedures for their implementation, monitoring, and improvement.

EE: Policy document; Relevant section of the Strategic Plan, Institutional procedures on providing technology transfer services; Relevant Senate and Council minutes promoting TT activities; Monitoring, and evaluation records of technology transfer services undertaken; Records of UBL cell or similar entities on TT services; Periodic surveys on impact; Client feedback.

9.4 Resources for Implementation of Outreach Activities

Std: The University/HEI ensures availability of adequate resources and facilities for the staff and students to engage in outreach activities (community services, technology transfer services, and consultancy services).

BP: Relevant resources and facilities are made available to students and staff to engage in community services, technology transfer services, and consultancy services.

EE: List of areas of expertise, resources, facilities, and programmes available for community engagement, technology transfer, and consultancy services; Feedback from staff, students, and participants on resources and facilities provided.

9.5 Centre for Outreach Activities

Std: The University/ HEI has established a centre or unit that is responsible for publicising the available resources and services for outreach activities, linking those requiring outreach services with the university.

BP: Potential expertise of the staff, services and programmes are published through media, website, and continuous dialogue with the community. Supplementary services and resources are secured through networking with other organisation, and a central database on the outreach activities is maintained.

EE: ToR of the centre/unit; websites, leaflets, brochures, and newsletters on outreach activities; List of supplementary services and resources secured; Records of securing service facilities, MOUs with relevant authorities; Comprehensive database on outreach activities conducted.

9.6 Income generation through outreach activities

Std: The University/HEI has well defined policies and procedures for the smooth functioning of income generating outreach activities along with ensuring the optimum utilisation of physical and human resources.

BP: A clearly defined policy framework and manual of procedures and mechanisms exist for income generating outreach activities. This includes guidelines on time allocation for outreach activities, budgeting, fee-structures, and rates; procedures for financial disbursement and partnering with other organisations; dispute resolution; and termination of contracts.

EE: Policy on income generation through outreach activities; Manual of procedures or guidelines on income generating outreach activities; Relevant minutes of the Centre; Minutes of the relevant finance committee meetings; Resource allocation for outreach activities; Senate and audit reports.

3.10 Criterion 10 – Quality Assurance

Scope – Quality Assurance (QA) is an integral part of the overall functioning of a University/HEI, to ensure that the education provision of the University/HEI meets both the purpose and the standards set. It is developed to ensure that the University/HEI is committed to comply with national policies, regulations, and guidelines prescribed by regulatory agencies. External monitoring emphasises accountability and continuous improvement. Traditional regulatory methods for assuring the quality of higher education are internal and conducted by CQAs. Critical self-assessment fosters the development of a quality culture that leads to continuous improvement and quality enhancement. Regular reporting to the highest body of the University/HEI ensures that quality assurance is well monitored.

Criterion ten is captured in the following ‘Standards’:

(Score Guide for each standard: 0 – Inadequate, 1 - Barely Adequate, 2 – Adequate, 3 – Good)

10.1 Policy on Quality Assurance

Std: University/HEI, in alignment with UGC Circular on quality assurance (QA), has developed clear policy, strategies, and action plans for the continuous improvement of the quality of its education provision.

BP: Recognising the responsibility for assuring quality lies with the institution, measures have been taken to improve the quality of its education provision in compliance with relevant circulars and guidelines.

EE: University QA Policy and establishment of internal QA framework; Relevant sections in Corporate/Strategic Plan and Action Plan on QA strategy; Minutes of the CQA Management Committee and QA cells.

10.2 Organisational Context for Quality Assurance

Std: Quality assurance activities are effectively integrated into the routine planning and administrative processes of all sections of the University/HEI.

BP: An internal system of quality assurance incorporating all sections, as prescribed by the relevant Circulars is in place.

EE: Organisational structure of internal QA framework; Composition of CQA and QA Cells; Action plans of QA Cells; Minutes of QA Cell meetings; Relevant minutes of Faculty Boards or Management Committees, Senate, and Council; Performance Scorecard of CQA.

10.3 CQAs and FQACs

Std: The University/HEI has clear guidelines established and in practice on QA related appointments and university/HEI provides necessary facilities for effective QA operations.

BP: The University/HEI is committed to operating a QA system by providing the necessary facilities for effective functioning.

EE: Guidelines/ instructions on appointment to QA positions; Appointment letters with ToRs of the members of CQAs and FQACs and other assigned human resources; List of facilities available at CQAs and FQACs; Location and space given for CQA and FQACs.

10.4 Guidelines and Mechanisms for Internalization of Best Practices

Std: The University/HEI has developed guidelines and mechanisms to promote continuous improvement of education provision through sharing best practices with national, regional, and international networks, and internalisation of best practices within all divisions of the institution.

BP: Internalisation of QA practices is promoted through a well-established and robust awareness-raising program involving all members of the academic and academic support services, non-academic staff, and administrative officers, which is to improve the quality of its education provision. Further, the engagement with national, regional, and international networks to share the best practices and internalisation of the same are promoted.

EE: University QA manual and guidelines on internalization of QA practices; Relevant SOPs and checklists; Minutes of relevant meetings; QA related workshops organised or participated; Awareness programmes and training programmes conducted by CQA or FQACs; List of participants; Records of practices shared or implemented; Feedback from participants; Relevant minutes of CQA or FQAC meetings; Records of engagement of students and all categories of staff in QA activities.

10.5 Systematic Internal Quality Reviews

Std: The University/HEI has formal mechanisms to internally review all study programs against established criteria or expected performance targets at all department and discipline-levels to ensure that all study programmes are well designed, regularly monitored, and periodically revised as necessary in order to maintain quality education provision.

BP: The programmes/ courses/awards are reviewed internally against established criteria or expected performance targets by the CQA and FQACs and reported at the Senate and Council, and improvement plans are prepared, implemented, and monitored by the faculties/ departments.

EE: Internal review criteria or performance targets; Relevant minutes of the CQA and FQACs; Relevant minutes of the Faculty Board, Senate, and Council; Procedures for appointment of internal reviewers; Internal review reports; Actions taken for improvements.

10.6 Institutional Commitment for External Reviews

Std: The University/HEI is committed to facilitate periodic external review processes and respond to queries on the aspect of quality.

BP: There are established procedures and mechanisms to prepare the university and study programmes for periodic external reviews and to respond to queries on quality aspects from external parties.

EE: Approved procedures to facilitate periodic external reviews; Relevant SOPs; Relevant minutes of QA management committee, FQACs, Faculty Boards, Senate, and the Council; Letters of appointment for SER writing team.

10.7 Response to External Reviews

Std: Recommendations of the External review reports are dealt with appropriately through the CQA in consultation with the Senate and the Council.

BP: Recommendations/comments made by reviewers in EQA reports are adequately addressed by CQA and FQACs, Faculty Boards, Senate and Council and are monitored by the CQA.

EE: Action plans in response to reports of IR and PRs; Council/Senate approved follow up actions addressing the recommendations of the Institutional Review Report (IRR); List of actions taken; Relevant minutes of QA management committee, FQACs, Faculty Board, Senate, and Council.

10.8 Use of Information for Improvement

Std: The University/HEI through its internal quality network (CQA and FQACs) monitors and evaluates the quality of education provision, reports to relevant authorities, and takes necessary remedial action for continuous improvement.

BP: The quality related information is regularly collected and analysed, and appropriate actions are taken to improve the quality of education provision.

EE: Quality related information (Z-Score of students admitted; Retention rate or dropout rate; Graduation rate at first attempt; Duration from admission to graduation; Graduate employment rate; Student/graduate satisfaction; Employer satisfaction; Feedback from alumni on improvement of education provisions); Reporting process; Relevant CQA/IQAC meeting minutes; Information or recommendations made for improvements; Records of actions taken.

Chapter Four

Use of Standards to Assess the Performance

This chapter describes the procedure to be used by the external peer Review Team to assess the quality of education provision of the University/ HEI under review, based on the 'Evidence' provided regarding the degree of internalisation of the stated 'Best Practices' for each 'Standard.' It also outlines the 'Score Guide, 'Weightages of Criteria', and 'Grading Scheme' to arrive at a final judgement. The University/ HEI may also use this procedure in the self-assessment of the quality of its educational offerings. The terms listed below are used in the validation and subsequent judgement of the University/ HEI.

- Standard-wise judgement to obtain the 'Standard-wise Score'
- Criterion-wise judgement to obtain the 'Raw Criterion-wise Score'
- Application of weightages to obtain the 'Actual Criterion-wise Score'
- Calculation of 'Overall University/HEI Score'
- Grading of overall performance of the University/HEI

The procedure is described in the following series of steps.

Step 1

Careful scrutiny of the Claim of the degree of achievement by each Standard' and noting down of the required relevant evidence.

Step 2

Objective and judicious analysis and assessment of the supporting 'Evidence' on compliance with each 'Standard' as listed in the Self-Evaluation Report.

Step 3

Based on the evidence, the assessment of the extent to which each 'Standard' has been achieved by the University/HEI and assigning and recording a Score with respect to each 'Standard' based on the 'Score Guide' is given in **Table 1**

Each standard will receive a score from 0-3. This will be the ‘Standard-wise Score.’

Table 1 - Score Guide for Each Performance Indicator

Score	Descriptor	Explanation of the Descriptor
3	Good	No issues/concerns about the strengths and quality of the evidence provided
2	Adequate	Few issues/concerns about the strengths and quality of the evidence provided
1	Barely Adequate	Major issues/concerns about the strengths and quality of the evidence provided
0	Inadequate	No relevant evidence provided during the review

Step 4

Derive the Performance of each Criterion by using the sum of the scores gained in all the standards in respect to the Criterion. The value obtained is the ‘Raw Criterion-wise Score.’

4.1. Weightages of Criteria

Considering the relative importance of the criteria for the quality of education provision at a University/ HEI, they were weighted differently on a scale of a thousand. The weights given in **Table 2** are used to calculate the 'Actual Criterion-Related Score'.

Table 2 - Differential Weightages of Criteria

No.	Criteria	Number of Standards	Weightage (on scale of thousand)
1	Governance and Management	20	200
2	Strength and Quality of Staff	10	100
3	Curriculum Design and Programme Development	12	120
4	Teaching-learning	09	90
5	Learning Resources, Student Support and Progression	12	100
6	Student Assessment and Awards	08	80

7	Postgraduate Studies, Research, Innovation and Commercialization	12	100
8.	Distance Education	10	70
9.	Community Engagement, Consultancy and Outreach	06	60
10.	Quality Assurance	08	80
Total		107	1000

Step 5

Convert the 'Raw Criterion-wise Score' into an 'Actual Criterion-wise Score' based on the weightages listed in Table 2 and the formula given in Box 1.

Taking Criterion 1 which has 20 standards as an example, and a fictitious value of 43 for the raw criterion score given by the Review Team, the actual criterion-wise score for Governance and Management (Criterion 1) is estimated as 143.3 (as per Box 1).

Box 1 - Formula for converting 'raw score' to 'actual score' on the weighted scale.

Maximum raw score for each criterion = total number of standards for the respective Criterion x 3 which is the maximum score for any Criterion.

Raw Criterion-wise score x weightage in a 1000-point scale = 'actual criterion-wise score'

Example: Criterion 1 with weightage of 200 (Table 4.2) and twenty standards

Raw criterion-wise score (given by the peer team) = 43

Maximum Score = (20 standards x 3) = 60

Weightage in a 1000 scale = 200 (as in Table 4.2)

Actual criterion-wise score = $(43/60) \times 200 = 143.3$

Step 6

Derive the ‘Overall University/HEI Score’ by totalling the ‘Actual Criterion-wise Scores’ of all ten Criteria and converting the total sum to a percentage as exemplified in Table 3.

Table 3 - – University/HEI Score Conversion to Percentage

No	Criteria	Weighted Minimum Score*	Actual Criterion-wise Score
1	Governance and Management	100	143.3
2	Strength and Quality of Staff	50	73.4
3	Curriculum Design and Programme Development	60	93.4
4	Teaching-Learning	45	72.0
5	Learning Resources, Student Support and Progression	50	75.0
6	Student Assessment and Awards	40	73.3
7	Postgraduate Studies, Research, Innovation and Commercialization	50	86.1
8.	Distance Education	35	61.3
9.	Community Engagement, Consultancy and Outreach	30	38.9
10.	Quality Assurance	40	70.0
	Total on a thousand scale		786.7
	%		79.0

*Represents 50% of the values given in Table 2

Overall Performance of University/HEI is graded based on the number of Criteria with the weighted minimum score and Overall University/HEI Score as shown in Table 4

Table 4 - Grading of Overall University/HEI performance

University/ HEI score%	Actual criteria- wise score	Grade	Performance descriptor	Interpretation of descriptor
≥ 80	Equal to or more than the minimum weighted score for each of all ten criteria (Table 3).	A	Very Good	High level of accomplishment of quality expected of an academic institution; should move towards excellence
70 – 79	Equal to or more than the minimum weighted score for nine of the ten criteria (Table 3)	B	Good	Satisfactory level of accomplishment of quality expected of an academic institution; room for improvement
60 – 69	Equal to or more than the minimum weighted score for eight of the ten criteria (Table 3)	C	Satisfactory	Minimum level of accomplishment of quality expected of an academic institution; definitely requires improvement
<60	Irrespective of minimum weighted criterion scores (Table 3).	D	Unsatisfactory	Inadequate level of accomplishment of quality expected of an academic institution: Needs significant degree of improvement in all aspects

Part III
Quality Assessment Guidelines for
Institutions and Reviewers

Chapter Five

Self-Evaluation Report

The Self-Evaluation Report (SER) for a University/HEI is a document prepared by the institution to reflect its assessment of the overall quality of the awards that it offers. It is prepared by a team appointed by the HEI in liaison with its Center for Quality Assurance (CQA), and in consultation with relevant stakeholders. Institutional self-awareness, informed by periodic self-evaluation of the strengths and areas for improvement, provides the principal point of reference for any external review process. Therefore, the SER becomes a key document both for the University/HEI and for the review team. A carefully and concisely prepared SER, while helping the University/HEI understand its strengths and weaknesses, also helps the review team to plan its review process more effectively and efficiently. This chapter is a guide for preparation of the SER to ensure comprehensiveness and maintain uniformity in SERs that are prepared by all Universities/HEIs

5.1 Purpose of the Self Evaluation Report

The purpose of the SER is to demonstrate to the review team as to how the University/ HEI is meeting stakeholder and community expectations - with respect to the Standards and Best Practices set forth in this manual and where applicable, those of statutory professional bodies. Chapter 3 of the Manual provides standards to be reached with respect to each of the best practice for each criterion and examples of sources of evidence for each standard. In the SER, the degree of internalisation of the best practices and the level of compliance with the standards should be described and supported by appropriate evidence. This would reflect the effectiveness with which the University/ HEI fulfils its responsibility to maintain the quality of academic provision and standards of awards. Therefore, the citation of all relevant evidence becomes one of the most important requirements of the SER. The review team expects the submission of all relevant evidence to support any claim of adherence of the University/ HEI to the standards. Evidence may include the Corporate Plan or the Strategic Management Plan, various By-laws; Student Handbook; numerous policy documents; University calendar; Annual Reports of the three preceding years; minutes of the Council, Board of Management, Senate, and Faculty Boards etc.

5.2 Scope, Accuracy and Focus of the SER

Scope: The SER should be an in-depth description and analysis, in conjunction with supporting evidence and comments, of the effectiveness of the ways in which the University/HEI discharges its responsibility for maintaining academic standards, quality, ethical behaviour, and adherence to good practices. Therefore, the SER should primarily reflect,

- a) the degree of internalisation of the best practices,
- b) the level of achievement of the standards,
- c) the degree to which the claims are supported by recorded evidence,
- d) the ways in which the institution has responded to national policy and guidelines in safeguarding standards and promoting the high quality of the awards, and
- e) how the University/HEI has responded to the recommendations of previous institutional reviews, supported by documentary evidence.

Accuracy of Information: It is imperative that the claims of the University/HEI and evidence mentioned in the SER are adequate, accurate, and verifiable. It is not the responsibility of the review team to seek out evidence to support the institution's claims. It is the responsibility of the University/HEI to furnish all adequate and accurate evidence required during the visit. The University/HEI should not make unsubstantiated claims. In instances where changes are in progress and evidence is not yet available, the University/HEI should state so. In such situations, the University/HEI should seek to address why the changes were necessary, how it is managing the process of change, and the expected outcome of the changes.

The focus of the Report: The focus of the SER is to describe the ways in which the University/HEI safeguards quality of education provision and the standards of the awards made in its name, through maintaining the quality of the ten areas of its functioning as identified by the ten criteria mentioned in Chapter 3 of this manual. The SER should reflect the extent to which these matters are dealt with by the University/HEI clearly, convincingly, and honestly.

5.3 Guidelines for Preparation of SER

The Universities/HEIs are expected to prepare the SER according to the structure given below. Accordingly, the SER should have the following sections.

- A. Introduction to the Institution
- B. Process of Compilation of the SER
- C. Compliance with the Criteria and Standards
- D. Summary

The contents of each section are outlined below.

5.3.1 Section A - Introduction to the Institution

The Introduction section begins with the vision and mission statements of the institution and will include the following information.

- a. Brief history of the University/HEI, its establishment, and major milestones of its development.
- b. Size in terms of faculties, academic departments, units, and centres.
- c. Number of students, teachers, and administrative and supporting staff.
- d. Organisational structure of the institution.
- e. Line of responsibilities amongst its administrative units and committees.
- f. The context within which the institution operates, by providing an analysis of the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) it is faced with.
- g. Major changes since the last review, implications of the planned changes, challenges for safeguarding academic standards, and quality of students' learning opportunities.

This information will help the review team better contextualise the university and its functions and plan the review process.

5.3.2 Section B – Process of the Compilation of SER

This section should contain an account of the process followed by the university/HEI to prepare the SER, and may include the following:

- a. Familiarisation of the Institutional Review Manual and the review process
- b. Appointment of SER writing team within the Terms of Reference (ToR)
- c. Composition and responsibilities of the working teams
- d. Activity schedules of the working teams and methods of collection of information
- e. Collation of data and recorded evidence
- f. Analysis and synthesis of the draft report by the working groups
- g. Compilation into a draft SER by the Chairperson of the writing team
- h. Forum to discuss the draft report.
- i. Finalisation of the report and submission

5.3.3 Section C- Adherence to the Criteria, Standards, and List of Evidence

In this section, the SER should describe the extent to which the University/HEI complies with the standards of the ten criteria described in Chapter 3 of this Manual. The template given in Table 5 should be used as a guide in writing this section. This section should be structured as ten sub-sections, under the ten criteria, in the same order given in the manual. It is advised to prepare each sub-section in tabular form, using the template given in Table 5. The details should be given in each column as follows.

- Column 01: The number of the standard as stated, in the same order given in the Manual
- Column 02: The level of achievement of the relevant standard by the University/HEI
- Column 03: The evidence supporting the claim
- Column 04: The relevant code number of the evidence

At the end of each sub-section, a summary statement on how the University/HEI has complied with the Standards of the respective Criterion should be provided in the appropriate box assigned for the purpose. Accordingly, the information under each Criterion should be presented in the form of the following Table. It will be more convenient to use the landscape layout for this section.

Table 5 - Template to be Used in Describing Compliance with the Standards

Criterion:			
Col. 01	Col. 02	Col. 03	Col. 04
Number of the Standard	University/HEI's Claims of the Level of Achievement of the Standard	List of Recorded Evidence to Support Each Claim of Compliance	Codes of the Examples of Evidence
Summary Statement of Compliance:			
.....			
.....			
.....			

Given below is an example for describing compliance with Standards 1.1 and 1.8.

Table 6 - Example for describing compliance with Standards 1.1 and 1.8.

Criterion 1 – Governance and Management			
Col. 01	Col. 02	Col. 03	Col. 04
Number of the Standard	University/HEI's Claims of the level of achievement of the Standard	List of Recorded Evidence to Support Each Claim of Compliance	Codes of the Evidence
1.1	Corporate Plan is in alignment with the National Higher Education Policy Framework and the action plan has enabled university development according to its mission and vision. Corporate Plan is widely circulated.	Corporate Plan for past five years	Uni/1.1/CP/
		Action Plans	Uni/1.1/AP/
		Website	Uni/1.1/ URL/
		Progress reports of the Action Plan	Uni/1.1/PR/
		Minutes of the Strategic Management Plan Committee	Uni/1.1/SMPC/
1.8	<p>a) All purchases of equipment and facilities are made by relevant committees according to the guidelines in the SOP adhering to the University Master Procurement Plan</p> <p>b). Supplies Division maintains inventory of fixed assets and consumables.</p> <p>c). Internal Audit Division conducts annual verification of equipment and facilities.</p>	University Master Procurement Plan for the five years.	Uni/1.8/MPP/
		Manual of Procedures/SOPs	Uni/1.8/SOP/
		Reports of Technical Evaluation Committee	Uni/1.8/TEC/
		Minutes of the Procurement Committee	Uni/1.8/PC/
		Fixed Assets Registry	Uni/1.8/FAR/
		Internal Auditor reports	Uni/1.8/IAR/
Summary Statement of Compliance:			
The University fully complies with 18 out of the 20 standards. Other two standards have been partially complied with, as the MIS system was introduced only 3 years ago, and the Information security policy was only- adopted recently.			

5.3.3 Section D - Summary and Conclusions/Current Action List

It would be helpful to the review team if the University/HEI draws meaningful conclusions from its self-evaluation. The summary should convey to the review team how the University/HEI reflects on its own policies and practices pertaining to all its educational activities in accordance with its vision and the mission, and the effectiveness of such policies and practices in maintaining the quality of its educational programs and awards. It should also reflect the degree to which the University/HEI has internalised the best practices given in the manual, and the internal monitoring mechanism employed by the CQA for continuous quality enhancement.

The SER should indicate the deficiencies or gaps, and the actions taken or planned to address those deficiencies or gaps. The University/HEI should identify a list of actions that are being undertaken at present or to be taken in the future to redress any weaknesses or failures. It is useful if the SER mentions any specific issues that it needs to discuss with the review team.

5.4 Length of the SER

The self-evaluation document should be concise and analytical, with references to all relevant evidence. It should not be fewer than 12,000 and more than 20,000 words (using Times New Roman in 12-point font size with 1.5-line space on A 4 size pages) excluding appendices. Appendices should be kept to a minimum and contain illustrative or statistical information essential to the main text.

A good self-evaluation document should be readily understandable to a reviewer. All sections should be self-explanatory as far as possible, minimising the need for the review team to request further clarification.

5.5 Need for Adherence to Guidelines

It is important that writers of SER follow the guidelines provided in this chapter. It should be noted that SERs prepared in conflict with these guidelines will be rejected and returned to the University/ HIE for resubmission.

Chapter Six

Review Team and the Review Visit

The knowledge, experience, and professional standards of the members of the review team and its chairperson are crucial to the conduct of a credible and high-quality institutional review. It is also of equal importance that reviewers and the HEIs are aware of each other's roles and responsibilities in order to ensure that the review process takes place in a timely manner, without any obstacles or conflicts. This chapter provides guidelines on the selection of reviewers, their training and attributes, the composition of the review team, profile of the reviewers, attributes of the review chair, review visit arrangements, schedule of meetings, etc.

6.1 Selection of Reviewers

The QAC maintains a pool of institutional reviewers from which it will select and appoint reviewers for each institutional review. Reviewers should be senior academics; either those who hold or have held senior or other high-level positions, such as current or past Vice-Chancellors, Directors of Institutes, Deans or Professors; preferably with a member from outside academia. The following criteria will be considered in the selection of institutional reviewers:

- Previous training as an Institutional Reviewer.
- Experience in quality assurance activity in areas appropriate to the review.
- Awareness of national, professional and employers' requirements of graduates.
- Acceptability to the university being reviewed, as independent reviewers with suitable subject or institutional expertise.
- Has no conflict of interest with the university/HEI

In addition, each reviewer should sign a self-declaration document that verifies that he/she has no conflict of interest with the university or HEI.

6.2 Composition of the Review Team

The review team would ideally be composed of five members, with adequate gender representation. If a person from a relevant industry or outside academia is selected, he or she should be an experienced person who can provide a view of the issues from a more industry- or professionally oriented perspective. The QAC will identify and appoint the Review Chair from among the team of five members selected for the review team.

6.3 Profile of Reviewers

Reviewers have a key role to play in an Institutional Review. The qualities of individual reviewers and the coherence and effectiveness of the review team are critical to the success and credibility of an external review process. Informed, constructive, and empathetic reviewers are extremely persuasive ambassadors for the review process, both inside and outside higher education institutions.

The Reviewer Profile below, describes the attributes and characteristics expected of Institutional Reviewers:

- High level of academic achievement
- High degree of professional integrity.
- Awareness and acceptance of nationally approved reference points such as SLQF, Subject Benchmark Statements and the manuals on quality assurance.
- An enquiring disposition.
- Personal authority and an amicable presence.
- Ability to function as an effective team member.
- Good individual time management skills.
- Ability to readily assimilate a large amount of disparate information.
- Good command of analysis and sound judgement.
- Ability to make appropriate unbiased, impartial judgments without prejudice.
- Experience in academic management and quality assurance.
- High standard of oral and written communication, preferably with experience in drafting formal reports.

In addition, the QAC expects reviewers outside academia to have: a broad knowledge of higher educational institutions and educational practices in Sri Lanka and abroad; experience of academic management and quality assurance; knowledge and understanding of the review process; and a detailed working knowledge of, and commitment to, the principles, national guidelines, and other aspects of quality assurance in higher education.

6.4 Review Chair – Profile and Role

The Review Chair would possess (in addition to the attributes stated in 6.3), extensive experience in higher education and familiarity with the standards and assurance of quality. The duties of the Review Chair (besides managing the conduct of the review), include writing certain sections as

agreed upon, and facilitating the compilation and editing of the review report. Above all, the Review Chair must enable the team to analyse the documents provided by the University/HEI and develop a robust base of evidence on which to make judgements.

In-depth knowledge of all aspects of higher education is a necessary prerequisite to providing leadership for the review team. Therefore, the Review Chair is expected to be a senior academic, with high professional standing. Additionally, the Review Chair also needs to possess certain managerial skills to be able to lead the review team effectively and efficiently. Some essential expectations for the review chair are:

- Ability to delegate responsibilities and manage small teams (with experience either in HE or in the industry).
- Ability to make the teamwork within given timescales with adherence to deadlines.
- Ability to communicate effectively in face-to-face interaction.
- Experience in word processing and the ability to produce clear and succinct reports on time.
- Ability to resolve conflicts, should the need arise.

The essential qualities outlined above may be reinforced by experience in teaching at Universities/HEIs; experience of programme accreditation by professional or statutory bodies; programme approval or validation events; and experience in conducting internal reviews.

6.5 Conduct of Reviewers

Reviewers should strive to uphold the highest standards of professional practice throughout the review process, exemplified by:

- Respectful, professional conduct towards staff and students.
- Honour of the privacy of the review process.
- Acceptance of individual responsibility for assigned tasks within the review team.
- Acceptance of collective responsibility for the review team's judgments.

Reviewers are expected to always comply with the Code of Conduct for Reviewers, provided in Appendix 01. Also, each reviewer is expected to complete and submit a signed Declaration of Interests Form (shown in Appendix 02) to the QAC.

6.6 Review Visit Arrangements

Consistency and clarity in interactions between a review team and a University/HEI will be facilitated by the following:

6.6.1 Quality Assurance Council and the University Grants Commission

- Selection of the review team in consultation with the University/HEI
- Designation of the review team Chair as the team's formal point of contact with the University/HEI before, during, and after the review.
- Informing the UGC, enabling the UGC Chairman to appoint the Review team.
- Sending copies of the SER to review team.
- Collection of individual desk evaluation reports from the review team, and organising a pre-review meeting between the review team and the CQA director to plan the site visit

6.6.2 Reviewee Institution and Centre for Quality Assurance

- Informing the QAC/UGC regarding the intention to be reviewed.
- Designation of the Chair/Secretary of the CQA of the respective University/HEI to coordinate communications between the HEI and the review team, and to provide logistical support.
- Informing the QAC/UGC of the contact information of the focal point of contact.
- Finalising the date and the schedule of the review visit in consultation with the Review Chair, Head of the University/HEI, and Coordinators of the IQACs.
- Making arrangements to provide any necessary facilities for the Review Team for the site visit

6.6.3 Review Team

Review Team is expected to carefully scrutinise the SER and supporting evidence made available to them during the desk review and submit individual desk evaluation reports to the QAC before the stipulated deadline. It is desirable to identify and indicate the aspects of the SER which needs further clarification during the site visit. The Review Team meets on the day before the site visit (pre-review meeting) with the reports. The panel members discuss the schedule of the visit (including panel meetings, group meetings/interviews, time to study documentation and observation of facilities), the findings from desk evaluation of the SER, and any highlighted lines

of inquiry which the panel may wish to focus on, i.e., what areas of the criteria/standards/practices the site visit may need to focus on in particular. This meeting will be useful to ease out issues and prepare a list of matters on which clarification is needed.

Following the discussion of their findings, Review Chair assigns the responsibilities to the team members and makes a list of additional input (if any) required by the Review Team for the review visit, following which they will inform the reviewee through the predetermined focal point.

The Review Team may reject the Self-Evaluation Report if it has not been written adhering to the guidelines given in this Manual and recommend to the QAC to request re-submission.

6.7 Review Visit

The Review Team shall arrive at the University/HEI on the predetermined date and time. The length of the visit shall be determined by the QAC at the beginning of the review process, based on the number of faculties in the University/HEI under review.

The site visit has several key functions.

- To enable the panel to share, face to face, the impressions gained from the information given in the SER.
- To ascertain the authenticity of the information provided in the SER
- To explore in meetings and interviews with the key individuals at the HEIs under review
- To explore through additional documentation or more information
- To produce a material for the draft report as a basis for further development after the site visit.
- To enable the site visit to fulfil these key functions, it is essential that the process and the panel's time are managed efficiently and effectively.

6.8 Review Process

6.8.1 Scrutinising Recorded Evidence

The review team will also carefully read and scrutinise the documentation and sources of information provided by the University/HEI as evidence. It will endeavour to keep the amount

of documentation requested during the visit to a minimum. The aim is to consider evidence furnished by the institution, and to focus on discussions with staff and students to get a clear picture of the institution's processes in operation. The review team should always seek to use all information requested in arriving at a judgement. The reviewers should bear in mind that the evidences may vary among the universities/ institutions, and that the evidences indicated in this manual are only examples, but not prescriptions.

6.8.2 Meetings and Discussions with Staff, Students, and other Stakeholders

The Review team, having read the SER beforehand, will suggest a schedule of meetings in advance of the visit. During the site visit, it is strongly advised that the review panel should meet, amongst others, all staff members who have contributed to writing the self-evaluation report. At the beginning of each meeting the Review Chair should:

- Introduce the panel members and ask for introductions from those present.
- Outline the areas to be covered, and the order in which they should be covered.
- Agree on the finishing time for the meeting.

The team may request meetings with individuals or small groups, for example with

- Representative group of the University Council/Governing Body (or equivalent)
- The Vice-Chancellor/Director
- Members of the Senior Management team
- Representative group from Senate/Academic Syndicate
- Deans of Faculties, Librarian, Heads of Departments/Units/Centres
- A cross section of academic staff/administrative support staff/non-academic staff
- Students and student representatives
- SER writer team
- External examiners
- External stakeholders including employers, industry, private sector involved with the university activities.
- Community representatives with links to or involvement with the university.

6.8.3 Observation of Resources and Facilities of the Institution

The review team also needs to ensure the availability of adequate and well-maintained infrastructure facilities including an ICT laboratory, language laboratory and library facilities for

the support of student learning and effective execution of study programmes. The team should focus on how far infrastructure growth matches academic growth in particular. Additionally, the review team needs to ensure that the University/HEI provides and maintains adequate learner support resources including counselling, ELTU, computer facilities, library, career guidance, residential facilities, welfare services, health and medical facilities, and facilities for sports and recreation, cultural and other creative activities.

6.8.4 Final panel meeting

Prior to the conclusion of the site visit, the panel needs to meet to draw together its findings, based on the information gathered from meetings, interviews, scanning evidence, and observation of resources and facilities. At this point it is useful to take the time to work through each aspect of the criteria and to confirm the panel's key findings and any areas of concern.

6.8.5 Debriefing

The site visit concludes with a final de-briefing meeting involving the panel members and Vice-Chancellor of the University/HEI, Deans of Faculties, Senior administrative staff, and Council/Board members of the CQA, and SER writer team, as decided by the panel. The chair will outline the panel's opinion on the strengths and weaknesses of the university/HEI with respect to each criterion, the commendations and recommendations for the University/HEI, and may give a general indication of its overall findings facilitating an interactive discussion. This will present an opportunity to the reviewees to correct any misjudgements that may have been made by the Review Team.

Within two weeks of the site visit, the Review Chair, along with the team members, is expected to prepare and submit a preliminary Review Report to the QAC/UGC. The details of this process are given in Chapter Seven.

Chapter Seven

Institutional Review Report

The Institutional Review Report (IRR) compiled by the review team upon completion of the institutional review is the outcome of the external peer review process. It the IRR is self-contained and provides a concise account of the review process and findings, an analysis of issues identified and discussed with members of the University/HEI, and the team's reflections and conclusions, giving reasons. The report will culminate in an overall assessment of the University's level of performance in terms of the quality of its education provision and the standard of its awards. The report also will include commendations on the University/ HEI's performance and recommendations for quality improvement. The IRR will be made available to the institution concerned for its approval by the QAC prior to finalizing. The finalized IRR will subsequently enter the public domain through the UGC website following the finalized acceptance by the University/HEI concerned and approval of the UGC, depending on the prevailing national policy at the time.

7.1 Purpose and Scope of the Institutional Review Report

The purpose of the IRR is to inform the institution and external parties of the findings of the review, and to provide a reference point to support and guide staff in continuing quality assurance activities for quality improvement and excellence.

The IRR will include

- A brief introduction to the University/HEI and its review context.
- A brief description of the review process (with the review visit programme or schedule of meetings as an appendix)
- The review team's view of the University/HEI's self-evaluation report (SER)
- Commentary on the actual criterion-wise scores achieved by the institution under the ten criteria of the Institutional Review.
- Overview of the University's/HEI's approach to Quality Assurance.
- Final assessment of performance of the institution in terms of quality of education provision, based on the institution wise score or University/HEI score.
- Commendations and recommendations
- Summary

7.2 Review Judgments

Under the existing quality assurance system, this Institutional Review Manual identifies ten broad areas that are reviewed periodically (usually every five years) by all Universities/HEIs in Sri Lanka. Institutional Review is a complex process. It involves analysing data and commenting on complex processes, as well as considering the mission and stated goals of a particular university, which makes comparisons across universities difficult. Not all aspects of institutional review will be equally important to all universities. Therefore, the review team will consider areas that one university may wish to emphasise on, while another may wish to excel in a different area.

Universities have different missions, and it is recognised that there are differences in the size, age, and maturity of institutions. It is important that the review process does not inappropriately and inaccurately measure all universities/HEIs against a fixed 'gold standard'. The review team is expected to evaluate university performance based on the information provided in SER, and not by making comparisons with their own or another university. Based on an objective analysis of the information on the degree to which the University/HEI under review meets the standards of the ten criteria, as described in Chapter 3, the Review Team should arrive at a collective judgement of the performance of the University/HEI. Judgments should not be negative, but constructive and supported by facts or reasons. Recommendations should not be prescriptive but should be framed so that the University/ HEI can build on what already exists and seek to improve quality.

At the same time, all Universities/HEIs are expected to be able to implement quality assurance measures that support and maintain the expected standards. These standards and quality should reflect agreed upon national guidelines. Therefore, the IRR is expected to provide clear and concise results that will enable the general public to form an opinion of the effectiveness of each University/ HEI in maintaining the standard of its awards, and the quality of education provided in its name.

7.3 Format of the Institutional Review Report

The following structure or format is recommended when drafting the report. Each section should comprise of a description, analysis, and commentary, followed by judgement.

Section 1 - Brief introduction to the university and its review context

This will introduce the reader to the University/HEI as well as the context for the review. It will describe the background of the university, such as the year of establishment as a university under the Universities Act No. 16 of 1978. Amongst others, it will list the number of faculties and departments, number of programmes and courses, number of students enrolled number of academic, administrative, and academic support and non-academic staff etc. to enable the reader to get an idea of the size, age, and maturity of the institution. This should reflect the context within which the HEI operates (considering constraints, if any).

This section will also summarise the outcomes of previous Institutional reviews or any interim Institutional Review reports which may have preceded this final report. It will mention any key issues within the ten criteria of Institutional Review which the team has identified for particular scrutiny, or as requiring correction.

Section 2 - Review team's view of the University's/HEI's Self - evaluation (SER)

This section presents the review team's view of the University's SER. The review team will also consider previous institutional reviews, if available. The SER should have been prepared in accordance with the guidelines provided in Chapter Five of this manual.

In this section of the report, the review team must identify the strengths and limitations of SER, the sufficiency and reliability of the evidence provided, comment on the analysis of SWOT, and identify areas that require special attention in the current review. The review team should also comment on HEI's Corporate Plan, the Vision, Mission, Goals and Objectives contained therein, and indicate whether clearly defined strategies and activities are in place and whether staff are accountable for implementation within a specific timeframe.

The review team will comment on whether corrective actions have been taken to address deficiencies identified in previous reviews and if not, what actions the University/ HEI is taking to implement the recommendations. Any obstacles encountered in implementing previous recommendations and limitations under which the University/ HEI is currently operating may be mentioned in this section.

Section 3 - A brief description of the Review Process

This section will describe the preparatory steps taken by the review team and the institution prior to the institutional review. It will also outline the details of the review visit such as the schedule of

meetings, staff interviewed, processes observed, evidence examined, and review team meetings at specific intervals during the review visit. It also mentions the review team's satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the facilities made available to the review team to conduct the review in a cost-effective manner with minimal loss of time during the five-day period. The university's commitment to openness, transparency, communication, and logistical support should also be mentioned in this section.

Section 4 - Overview of the University's approach to Quality and Standards

This section will present the review team's observations on the University's overall approach to quality assurance and management. Although the HEI's approach to quality assurance is the last criterion addressed, it deserves special mention. IQA is an ongoing process that is integrated into the routine daily activities of an institution.

This section will present the key features of the University's approach and arrangements for quality assurance, any recent and planned developments, and evidence from SER of the University's ability to take action to address any weaknesses and improve. More importantly, this section should address whether the University has a well-established CQA in accordance with the Internal Quality Assurance Manual for Sri Lankan Universities (2013) and IQA circulars of 2015 and 2019 of the UGC) and whether the quality culture has improved since the last IR.

The commentary could include whether

- The internal quality assurance processes being reviewed by the University / HEI includes one or more of the processes listed in the IQA Manual and UGC circulars
- The existing practices within these processes have contributed to the maintenance of the standards.
- The institution has taken the necessary steps to identify and implement actions that would improve quality in order to achieve excellence.

Section 5 - Commentary on the ten criteria of Institutional Review

This section should provide the review team's analysis of the effectiveness of the university's/ HEI processes with respect to each of the ten criteria identified in this manual. Where appropriate, reference should be made to national guidelines and/or local codes of practice as the basis for the review team's commentary. The commentary would focus on the objective (quantitative) evaluation of the standard values and the actual criterion values calculated, according to the respective weights of the ten criteria as described in Chapter 4. This section will conclude with a

commentary on the review team's overall impression (global/qualitative) of the University / HEI's ability to achieve and maintain the highest standards and quality expected under the ten criteria, within the existing constraints of the University/ HEI.

Section 6 - Grading of Overall Performance of the University/HEI

This section will present the review team's assessment of the level of accomplishment of quality expected of an academic institution, based on the classification of a University/ HEI performance into categories A, B, C, or D, as indicated in Chapter 4 under the section on Weightages of Criteria.

The University/ HEI score is the sum of all actual criterion-wise scores expressed as a percentage. The University/ HEI percentage score together with the minimum weighted criterion-wise score for each criterion results in a grade of A, B, C, or D for the University that has undergone the Institutional Review.

If a University/ HEI receives an overall grade of A, the Institutional Review Report (IRR) will indicate that grade and encourage the University/ HEI to continue to strive for quality improvement and excellence.

If the University/ HEI receives a grade of B or C, the IRR will indicate the grade and mention the criteria that received less than the minimum weighted score and the standards that received an insufficient or barely adequate score (score of 0 or 1). The University/ HEI will make note of the IRR's recommendations and take corrective action to improve overall quality, focusing on the standards and criteria that scored less than the minimum expected.

Universities/HEIs that receive an overall grade of D are required to take remedial measures and inform the QAC regarding the measures taken within three years of the review. The coordination of these activities, including informing the QAC, will be the responsibility of the CQA.

Section 7 - Commendations and Recommendations

This will list the commendations of policy and procedures for higher education, areas of good and innovative practice, quality of research and publications, approval and review of programmes and awards, quality of teaching and students' assessments, research and innovations, community engagement, national and international collaborations, management information systems, etc. This list is not all inclusive, and any comments on quality pertaining to excellence in higher education could be included under commendations.

In addition, this section will also make recommendations for remedial actions needed to bring about improvement and quality enhancement.

Section 8 – Summary

This will be a summary of the review team's main findings, as given under the different sections of the report, and will be no longer than 1000 words.

7.4 Procedure for Submission of the Report

Review team members will take responsibility for each section of the report. The Chair of the institutional review team will coordinate the individual sections of the report to produce the final comprehensive report agreed upon by the team. The review team will submit a draft report to the QAC, and the QAC sends a copy of the same report to the University.

7.4.1 Request for Discussion

The review team would have already communicated its conclusions at the final meeting (de-briefing) with the Vice Chancellor and senior management of the University/HEI at the end of the review visit, where the latter would have had the opportunity to clarify any factual errors and misinterpretations made by the review team. The University may, however, request further discussion with the review team on the content of the report after receipt of the draft report before it is made public. The university should notify the QAC that it wishes to exercise this option within two weeks of receipt of the initial draft report, highlighting the areas it wishes to discuss.

The meeting to discuss any clarifications should be held within six weeks of the University's submission of the proposal and may last up to one day. The meeting should normally be chaired by a member of the QAC. The chair of the meeting should not be a member of, or otherwise have close links to the university in question.

Other participants at the meeting will be members of the review team, representatives selected by the university (preferably members of SER) writer team, the staff who participated in the review, and members of the university administration. A representative of the QAC should take detailed notes of the meeting.

The discussion is likely to focus on one or more of the following:

- A request by the University/ HEI for clarification of one or more statements in the draft report.
- A request from the University/ HEI to change one or more statements in the report.

The minutes of the meeting will be approved by the Chair after consultation with colleagues on the QAC. The final decision on any changes to the content of the draft report will be made by the Chair, who then submits it to the QAC.

The QAC sends the amended report prepared by the review team chair to the University/ HEI. After acceptance of the report by the Vice Chancellor of the University/ HEI, will be edited by a panel of experienced academics to ensure clarity, adherence to guidelines, and consistent formatting. The final edited version will be submitted to the UGC Standing Committee on Quality Assurance and the UGC for approval.

7.5 Publication of the Report

The final version of the Institutional Review Report, approved by the Standing Committee on Quality Assurance and the Commission, will be published on the official website of the QAC-UGC.

7.6 Follow-up Actions

Once the UGC approves the final Institutional Review Report, the University/HEI is expected to take the following actions.

1. Discuss the Institutional Review Report at the Senate and the Council.
2. Instruct the CQA to draw up an action plan based on the suggestions and recommendations of the review report, using the prescribed format, and submit it to the UGC within six months.
3. Implement and monitor the Action Plan by the CQA Management Committee with the support of relevant officials and staff.
4. Report the progress of the implementation of the Action Plan through the CQA Management Committee to the Senate regularly, and through the Vice Chancellor to the QAC annually, using the prescribed format.

Appendix 1

Code of Conduct for Institutional and Programme Reviewers

Preamble

This Code of Conduct (“the Code”) describes rules of good behaviour for reviewers engaged in the external reviews conducted by the Quality Assurance Council of the University Grants Commission (QAC-UGC) and covers the entire task, from accepting the assignment, to submission of the final report to the QAC. The Code gives the basic principles and guidelines with which all members of review panels should comply, and reviewers are expected to conduct reviews within the spirit of the Code. Upon signature of their review contracts, all reviewers consent to comply and respect the principles, rules and guidelines stipulated in this Code. In case of any doubt concerning the applicability of a particular section of the Code, the reviewer should contact the Director QAC of the UGC for clarifications.

Verifiable evidence concerning a breach of the Code by a reviewer, or evidence of any other unprofessional conduct not covered in this Code, may result in termination of the reviewer’s contract by the QAC and/or listing of the reviewer as ineligible for future contracts, and/or reporting to the Council of the reviewer’s University.

An EQA review analyses the fitness of an institution’s/Faculty’s processes for managing and assuring the expected outcomes of academic activities, including study programs undertaken by the institution/faculty, and the quality of student learning experience and standards of awards. It evaluates the extent to which IQA mechanisms adopted by the institution/ faculty can be relied upon to maintain the quality of provision of educational programmes over time.

The reviewer is expected to perform EQA reviews under the guidance of QAC. The reviewer is also expected to exercise maximum objectivity in weighing ground realities and hard and soft evidence provided in support of the claims made in the SER by the reviewee against the standards stipulated in the prescribed Review Manuals by the QAC. As such, the reviewer must have a complete understanding of the procedures detailed in the relevant review manual.

Definitions

1. Confidential information:

Information that was obtained as a consequence of conducting the review and that is not publicly available.

2. Conflict of Interest:

a. Real Conflict of Interest: The reviewer has personal or organisational interests which might influence the performance of his/her duties and responsibilities as a reviewer.

b. Apparent conflict of interest: A situation where it can be reasonably perceived that the reviewer's private interests might influence the performance of his / her duties and responsibilities as a reviewer.

3. Impartial: Absence of prejudice towards any party

4. Independent: Free of external pressure and remaining neutral

5. Integrity: Acting honestly and ethically in the process, being objective and independent

6. Misconduct: Intentional or negligent failure to observe the rules of conduct set by this Code.

Core Values

Core values that should be upheld by all involved parties include:

- A. Persistent effort to achieve the highest level of standards
- B. Conscientious and continuous pursuit of excellence in one's work
- C. Honesty, integrity, and objectivity in all involved procedures
- D. Responsibility for one's actions and conduct
- E. Respect for rights, differences, and dignity of stakeholders of the process
- F. Accountability to the public
- G. Transparency in all dealings
- H. Impartiality and independence in all dealings

Code of Conduct

In the conduct of all external reviews, all reviewers are at all times required to uphold the above core values, along with following guidelines, conduct themselves in a manner that does not bring the UGC or academia into disrepute, to be cognisant of the fact that their contribution is of national interest, and that they represent the UGC.

1. Objectivity: The reviewer shall at all times make a maximum effort to be objective:

- 1.1. Make sure that decisions are always based on first-hand evidence.
- 1.2. Go by the definitions provided in the review manual. On matters where definitions are not provided in the manual, the reviewers as a team may arrive at a viable interpretation, which is expected to be in the report for complete transparency.
- 1.3. Not use personal/subjective ideas/interpretations or interpretations used in their own study programs/institutions to assess practices adopted by the program/institution under review.
- 1.4. Judgements must be robust and fully supported by evidence so that they can be defended, if required.
- 1.5. Weigh and test the evidence presented by the institution with claims made in the SER and the requirements in the review manual in making judgements.
- 1.6. Be an informed observer before contributing to decision-making by the panel.

2. Confidentiality: the reviewer shall protect the confidentiality of all proceedings and information:

- 2.1. Safeguard in strict confidence, all information made available to him/her, with special reference to communications containing sensitive information, information of a personal nature that may lead to defamations if disclosed, and information already contested at Courts of Law.
- 2.2. Not disclose any confidential information acquired during the review process to anyone external to the panel (excluding the confidential feedback provided to the Director, QAC following the review task for the continuous improvement of the review process).
- 2.3. Not disclose any information concerning the evaluation procedure to any other party (in addition to the information given in the final full report and the feedback provided to the Director, QAC).
- 2.4. From the date of accepting the assignment, the reviewer shall not contact any colleague or another individual of the institution or program under review or communicate whatsoever matters pertinent to the review with such individual/individuals, except through the QAC.

The Review Chair may communicate with the Dean of a study program or the Director of the CQA regarding site-visit arrangements with the awareness of the Director of the QAC on the matter.

3. Conflict of Interest: The reviewer shall act with strict impartiality:

- 3.1. Identify and declare any real or apparent conflict between personal interest (direct or indirect) and interests of QAC and reviewee, which will undermine objectivity.
- 3.2. Inform the QAC immediately of any change in interest that may conflict with that of the QAC.
- 3.3. Consider that all parties/groups that they discuss/meet with are equally important stakeholders in the process of the review.
- 3.4. No reviewer shall use their encounter with the reviewee to his/her personal advantage.

4. Integrity: The reviewer shall act honestly and ethically:

- 4.1. Conduct of the reviewer should not foster any suspicion that he/she is behaving in a particular manner of personal interest or advantage.
- 4.2. Reviewer shall exercise maximum honesty during the entire review process.
- 4.3. Reviewer shall not accept any direct or indirect gift, reward or hospitality or undue extra attention which may appear to place them under obligation and compromise impartiality. The reviewer shall discuss within the team or contact the Director, QAC immediately, if he/she feels that the situation/any potential offer is not under his/her control.
- 4.4. Reviewer shall not offer any favour or undue extra attention to any party/individual of the program or the institution under review.
- 4.5. Reviewer shall refrain from any behaviour that could be interpreted as dishonest, unethical, and unprofessional.
- 4.6. The reviewer is expected to reflect on his/her own conduct, and question and analyse the integrity and underlying motives behind any possible activity that may compromise the integrity of the review

Conduct During Site Visit

1. Evaluation during site visit

- 1.1. The evaluation on site shall be based on claims made in the SER.
- 1.2. The reviewer shall be aware that the task during the site visit is to weigh the evidence (soft or hard) provided/ witnessed/ received in support of the claims made in the SER against the standards stipulated in the review manual.

- 1.3. The reviewers shall not demand or insist on further evidence or any other requirement during the site visit, but report on the evidence witnessed and their experience of the review. However, the reviewer may seek clarifications on ambiguous matters with documents or verbal explanations.

2. Relationship with the reviewee

- 2.1. The reviewer should bear in mind that the site visit is a full-time assignment.
- 2.2. The reviewer should behave, and be perceived to behave, as a peer (equal) of the academics of the institution or the program under review and abstain from adopting a position of ‘superiority’ over the reviewee.
- 2.3. The reviewer should not assume another role during the site visit other than that of being a reviewer. The reviewer should refrain from attempting to teach or advocate a particular view or practice to the reviewee by indicating that such practice is already being adopted by the institution/program of the reviewer etc. (e.g., assuming an “I have done it, but you have not”; “I have it, but you don’t” attitude). A reviewer may, however, make suggestions by way of sharing good practices.
- 2.4. The reviewer should be polite and courteous to all stakeholders.
- 2.5. The reviewer should be tolerant, and show respect for the rights, differences, and dignity of all stakeholders.
- 2.6. The reviewer should strive to create a pleasant and productive working environment for all parties.

3. Commitment to competency and professionalism

- 3.1. The reviewer should always exercise and maintain professional competence.
- 3.2. The reviewer should be prepared and pay full attention in the task at hand.
- 3.3. The reviewer should participate in the full schedule.
- 3.4. The reviewer should keep careful records of observed supporting evidence, facilities and teaching practices, and discussions during stakeholder meetings.
- 3.5. The reviewer shall strive to be punctual and adhere to the site visit schedule as much as possible, especially regarding meetings with stakeholders.
- 3.6. The reviewer shall dress appropriately.
- 3.7. Communication:
 - 3.7.1. The reviewer should maintain purposeful dialogues focused on the program or institution under review.

- 3.7.2. The reviewer should be open and clear as much as possible in the discussions.
- 3.7.3. The reviewer should ask questions in a friendly and constructive manner, creating a conducive environment that minimises stress and builds trust and respect.
- 3.7.4. The reviewer should refrain from being sarcastic and intimidating.
- 3.7.5. The reviewer should avoid personal questions and deal carefully with any sensitive information that may be divulged by stakeholders.
- 3.7.6. The reviewer should ensure that all views are entertained, valued, and listened to, as well as fostering the exchange of opinions.
- 3.7.7. The reviewer should not use prescriptive language, but instead make suggestions for change where appropriate.

4. Providing feedback

- 4.1. The reviewer should ensure that feedback on findings is given in a constructive and qualitative manner.
- 4.2. The review panel must report honestly and fairly on their findings during the site visit, with reference to the strengths and weaknesses under each review criterion.
- 4.3. The review panel should keep the specific outcomes (grade, scores, etc.) confidential during the site visit, and only declare the same through the report.
- 4.4. The review panel must ensure that judgements are accurate and reliable and reflect ground level operations of the institution/program.

5. Conduct within the Review Panel

- 5.1. Reviewers must ensure that each panel member is an equal partner and cooperate in undertaking specific responsibilities under the guidance of the Chair of the panel.
- 5.2. All reviewers should attend private meetings of the panel when convened by the Chair.
- 5.3. All reviewers should ensure that the final outcomes are decided by consensus. If there is a significant difference of opinion among members of the review panel, the opinion of the majority should be final.

6. Review Chair

- 6.1. Should conduct, command and exercise authority in a fair and responsible manner.
- 6.2. Should oversee the review process in an all-inclusive manner.
- 6.3. Is expected to make and keep to the schedules.
- 6.4. Is expected to be responsible for communications with the QAC and the reviewee.

- 6.5. Should ensure that the views of all participants are valued and considered and foster the open exchange of opinions.
- 6.6. Should ensure that everyone in the meeting feels comfortable with the review panel.
- 6.7. At the end of each meeting, should recapitulate the main topics covered in the discussion in order to make sure that all issues have been brought to debate.
- 6.8. Should strive to ensure that there are no unsettled issues or concerns at the end of every meeting

REPORT WRITING

1. The reviewer should remain in regular contact with the Review Chair and other members of the Review Panel until the Review Report has been finalised and submitted to the QAC.
2. All members of the Review Panel should share their contributions to the review report by email in a timely fashion, so that the Review Chair is able to produce a single, comprehensive review report that is consistent with the guidance set out in the relevant review manual.
3. Each member of the Review Panel should carefully read those sections of the Review Report written by other members of the panel and ensure that they are in agreement with the views expressed therein. Ultimately, the responsibility for the full content of the final report is shared amongst the reviewers.
4. Each reviewer should strive to meet deadlines set collectively by the Review Panel in order to meet the QAC deadlines for submission of the preliminary report, followed by the draft Review Report and the finalised Review Report

MATERIAL REFERENCED

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Manual for Review of Undergraduate Study Programmes of Sri Lankan Universities and Higher Education Institutions. UGC, 2015

Manual for Institutional Review of Sri Lankan Universities and Higher Education Institutions. UGC, 2015.

Appendix 2

Declaration of Interest for External Reviewers

External reviews conducted by the Quality Assurance Council (QAC) of the University Grants Commission (UGC) on programmes of study and higher education institutes requires the involvement of large numbers of university academics who may have interests related to the institution under review. To ensure the highest integrity and public confidence in such reviews, the QAC requires those serving as reviewers to disclose any circumstances that could give rise to or be reasonably perceived to give rise to conflict of interest, as it may affect or appear to influence the reviewer's objectivity and independence. A perceived conflict of interest exists when an interest would not necessarily influence the individual but could result in the individual's objectivity being questioned by others.

You must disclose, on this Declaration of Interests form, any financial, professional, employment or other interest relevant to the institution or programme under review that could influence the outcome of the decision made by the QAC regarding the final grading. You must also declare relevant interests of your immediate family members in relation to the same study program or institution.

Please note that failure to fully complete and disclose all relevant information on this form may, depending on the circumstances, lead the QAC to decide not to appoint you to a similar assignment in the future. Upon your declaration, the QAC holds the right to make the decision regarding the service expected from you in relation to a particular study program or institution. Answering 'yes' to a question on the form printed on the next page does not automatically disqualify you from undertaking a review. Your answers will be reviewed by the QAC to determine whether you have a conflict of interest relevant to the review at hand. Based on your declaration, the QAC may conclude that no potential conflict exists or that the interest is irrelevant or insignificant. If, however, a declared interest is determined to be potentially or clearly significant, the QAC may conclude that you should not be part of the respective Review Team. If you are unable or unwilling to disclose the details of an interest that may pose a real or perceived conflict, you must disclose that a conflict of interest may exist, and in that event the QAC may decide that you be totally recused from the review following a consultation with you.

Please complete this form and submit it to the Director QAC as soon as you are notified of your appointment as a reviewer to a particular study program or institution, so that the QAC has adequate time to make a decision and manage the situation to prevent any delays in the review process.

Name of the University under review:

Name of faculty and degree programme under review (for program review only):

.....

Name of reviewer:

NIC No:

A. Please answer each of the questions below. If the answer to any of the questions is ‘yes,’ briefly describe the circumstances in the following table.

1. Within the past five years, have you or a member of your immediate family*, been an employee of the university under review? Yes No

2. Within the past five years, has any member of your immediate family* been a student in the university under review? Yes No

3. Do you have an undergraduate or postgraduate degree from the university under review? Yes No

4. Do you have any other relationship with the university under review that may lead to conflict of interest? Yes No

*The term ‘immediate family’ refers to your spouse, parents, siblings, and children.

This includes close acquaintance with the Head of Department, Dean or Vice-Chancellor of the relevant university; and research collaborations within the past five years, with staff in the Department / University under review

B. Explanation of ‘yes’ responses: If the answer to any of the above questions is ‘yes,’ briefly describe the circumstances below.

Type of interest (Question no)	If it is relevant to a family member, specify relationship	Describe other relevant details including the nature and dates and duration of the circumstance/s of interest or the value of it, if financial

Declaration: I hereby declare on my honour that the disclosed information is true and complete to the best of my knowledge. Should there be any change to the above information, I will promptly notify the Director / QAC and complete a new declaration of interest form that describes the changes.

Date:

Signature

Appendix 3

List of Academics who provided feedback on applicability of the draft manual

Name of the University	Name of the Participant	Position
University of Colombo	Prof. Gominda Ponnamparuma	Director - CQA
University of Peradeniya	Prof. Ranjith Pallegama	Director - CQA
	Prof. Deepthi Bandara	Senior Professor
	Prof. ERN Gunawardena	Professor
	Prof. Kosala Marambe	Professor
	Prof. Veranja Liyanapathirana	Professor
	Prof. W.A.U. Vitharana	Professor
	Prof. R. Maheswaran	Assistant Professor
	Dr. Nilupa Amarasinghe	Senior Lecturer
	Mrs. RM Champika Kumari Rathnayake	Senior Lecturer
	Mrs. H.M. Sanjeevani Wasana	Lecturer
University of Sri Jayewardenepura	Prof R B Marasinghe	Director - CQA
	Prof. D Samantha N P Senarathne	Senior Professor
	Prof Sunethra Thennakoon	Professor
	Prof. Charmalie Nahallage	Professor
	Prof. B.M.H.A. Banneheke	Associate Professor
	Dr. S. Weerasinghe	Senior Lecturer
	Dr. Thamara Amarasekara	Senior Lecturer
	Dr. K A K Gnanaweera	Senior Lecturer
	Prof. Bimalka Seneviratne	Senior Lecturer
	Mrs. H.M. Badra Hearath	Senior Lecturer
	Dr. Bandula Wijesinghe	Lecturer
University of Kelaniya	Prof. Nilanthi de Silva	Vice Chancellor
	Prof. S Priyangani Senannayake	Director - CQA
	Prof. Susima Weligamage	Professor
	Prof. DSM De Silva	Professor
	Prof. Tissa Amarakoon	Professor

	Dr. Rasika Wanigatunge	Senior Lecturer
University of Moratuwa	Mr. V. Sivahar	Director - CQA
University of Jaffna	Prof. Meena Senthilnathan	Director - CQA
	Dr. Vivian Sathiyaseelan	Senior Lecturer
University of Ruhuna	Prof. Sudheera Jayasinghe	Director - CQA
	Prof. Thusitha Gunawardana	Professor
	Mrs. J.K. De Silva	Senior Lecturer
Open University of Sri Lanka	Prof. S.A.M.A.N.S Senanayake	Director - CQA
	Prof. Dayalatha Lekamge	Senior Professor
	Prof. N. Abeyssekera	Professor
	Dr. S. N. Morais	Senior Lecturer
Eastern University of Sri Lanka	Dr P Elango	Director - CQA
South Eastern University of Sri Lanka	Prof. M. I. S. Safeena	Director - CQA
Rajarata University of Sri Lanka	Dr. Dilani Hettiarachchi	Director - CQA
	Prof. Aruni Weerasinghe	Senior Professor
	Prof. Sanath Hettiarachchi	Senior Professor
	Dr. Ahinsa Ranaweera	Senior Lecturer
Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka	Prof. H.A.D. Ruwandeepika	Director - CQA
Wayamba University of Sri Lanka	Prof. K D Renuka Silva	Director - CQA
Uva Wellassa University of Sri Lanka	Dr. AMANB Attanayake	Director - CQA
	Dr. Indunil Rathnayake	Senior Lecturer
University of the Visual and Performing Arts	Dr. Chinthaka P. Meddegoda	Director - CQA
	Dr. Vallipuram Anavarathan	Lecturer
University of Vavuniya	Prof. A Pushpanathan	Director - CQA
	Dr. Jeyagowri Nimalan	Senior Lecturer
	Dr. Manickavasakar Kayanan	Senior Lecturer
Gampaha Wickramarachchi University of Indigenous Medicine	Dr. Ranuka Hewage	Director - CQA

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Glossary of Terms

Academic calendar	The schedule of planned events of an institution for the academic year giving details such as scheduled dates of reopening for the academic year, commencement of semesters, holidays, examinations, release of results, convocation, etc.
Academic expertise	Intellectual skills on reasoning based on fundamentals/ concepts/ theories/ principles of subject areas acquired through studying, training, or practice in a university/ college / academy
Academic freedom	The right for individual scholars to learn, teach, research, and publish without interference or fear of reprisal
Academic infrastructure	Academic infrastructure is the name given to the array of quality-related processes and practices
Academic quality	The overall level of performance of the academic unit in the context of its mission as measured by the extent of accomplishment of the unit's intended learning outcomes, operational outcomes, and broad-based goals; describes how well the study programme is designed and administered and learning opportunities available help students to achieve the intended learning outcomes and awards. It encompasses provision of relevant curricula, effective teaching, learning support, assessment and learning opportunities
Academic recognition	Academic recognition is a set of procedures and processes for the acknowledgement and acceptance (subject to conditions), between institutions and countries, of higher education qualifications.
Academic standards	Academic standards refer to the achievement of students and can be either the standard set (to be met or surpassed) or the standard achieved by a student.
Academic transcript	Documentation of a student's permanent academic record, which usually means all courses taken, all grades received, all honours received, and degree conferred to a student.
Access	The arrangements that an educational or training system makes with respect to entry requirements and provisions in order to

	offer greater opportunities for a much wider range of applicants in flexible terms than the traditional system
Accountability	Accountability is the requirement, when undertaking an activity, to expressly address the concerns, requirements, or perspectives of others.
Accreditation	A formal process of enquiry against a set of agreed criteria (or standards), undertaken by a formally constituted body and will lead, if successful, to a formal status (as an accredited institution or accredited programme or accredited degree).
Accrediting agency	An organisation or association with authority to certify the quality of the educational provision of an institution and of individual programmes.
Action plan	Description of specific activities related to short- and long-term strategic objectives including outcomes and outputs with detailed roadmap, planned milestones, details of resource commitments and timelines.
Active learning	Interactive instructional techniques that engage students in such higher order thinking tasks such as analysis, synthesis, evaluation, and reflection. Students engaged in active learning might use resources beyond the faculty. They may demonstrate their abilities to analyse, synthesis, and evaluate through projects, presentations, experiments, simulations, internships, practicum, independent study projects, peer teaching, role playing, or written documents.
Alumni	Former students who have graduated from the programme of study offered by the HEI.
Assessment	The measurement of aspects of a learner's performance in terms of knowledge, skills, and attitudes. It can be formal or informal and formative or summative.
Assessment blueprinting	Mapping of the individual assessment items against intended learning outcomes of a study programme and allocating appropriate weightages to each assessment item, ensuring coverage of all aspects of the curriculum and educational domains by the assessment programme over a specified period of time

Assessment of student learning	Assessment of student learning is the process of evaluating the extent to which participants in education have developed their knowledge, understanding and abilities.
Assessment of teaching and learning	Assessment of teaching and learning is the process of evaluating the quality and appropriateness of the learning process, including teacher performance and pedagogic approach.
Assessment rubric	A scoring or grading tool that explicitly represents the performance expectations for each of the components/ dimensions of an assigned task at each level of mastery.
Assignments	Student-centred learning exercises given during a course at predetermined intervals and according to defined criteria in fulfilment of assessment requirements. Work submitted by the learners may be computer-marked or tutor marked.
Assurance	Assurance of quality in higher education is a process of establishing stakeholder confidence that provision (input, process, and outcomes) fulfils expectations or measures up to threshold minimum requirements
Attestation of SLQF Level equivalence	Certification of the SLQF level equivalent. The process applicable is applicable to qualifications awarded for programmes of study designed and approved prior to the publication of SLQF 2015, or to programmes that are no longer offered. Such attestation confirms that such qualifications are academically equivalent to comparable SLQF-compliant qualifications.
Audio-visual	A term used to describe instructional materials or teaching aid which use both sound and vision; more generally, a term used to describe all communication media.
Award	A certificate or title conferred by an academic institution signifying that the recipient has successfully completed a prescribed course of study that leads to a qualification such as a degree, diploma or certificate or other formal recognition.
Benchmark statement	A benchmark statement, in higher education, provides a reference point against which outcomes can be measured and refers to a particular specification of programme characteristics and indicative standards.

Benchmarking	Benchmarking is a process that enables comparison of inputs, processes, or outputs between institutions (or parts of institutions) or within a single institution over time.
Best practice	Best practice refers to effective, ideal, or paradigmatic practice within an organisation that others would benefit from adopting or adapting to achieve a prescribed standard.
Blended learning	A style of education in which students learn via electronic and online media as well as traditional face-to-face teaching.
Career guidance	Careers guidance is the process that enables learners to make well-informed decisions about future learning or work activities.
Certification	Certification is the process of formally acknowledging achievement or compliance: it can be used to signify the achievement of an individual, such as a student, or of an institution.
Code of conduct	Expectations of behaviour mutually agreed upon by the institution and its constituent members.
Collaboration	The process by which people/organisations work together to accomplish a common mission.
Collaborative learning	Method of teaching and learning in which students' team together to explore a significant question or create a meaningful project. Within the context of electronic communication, collaborative learning can take place without members being physically in the same location.
Community engagement	A working relationship between an institution and one or more community groups to help both to understand and act on the needs and issues that the community experiences.
Competence	Is the acquisition of knowledge skills and abilities at a level of expertise sufficient to be able to perform in an appropriate work setting (within or outside academia).
Competencies	Ability to apply to practical situations the essential principles and techniques of a particular subject.
Compliance	State of being in accordance with established guidelines, specifications, requirements, or legislation.
Compliance	A state of being in accordance with established guidelines, specifications, requirements, or legislation.

Constituencies	Various departments in the institution including administration and other sectors.
Constructive Alignment	Alignment of the three basic areas of a curriculum, namely, the intended learning outcomes, respective teaching-learning activities, and assessment activities. An essential step in developing an outcome-based curriculum.
Continuing Professional Development (CPD)	Refers to study (that may accumulate to whole programmes with awards) designed to upgrade knowledge and skills of practitioners in the professions.
Continuous improvement	A management process whereby the content, material, services, teaching/learning processes are constantly evaluated in the light of their efficiency, effectiveness, and flexibility, and continuously improved.
Continuous quality improvement	A philosophy and attitude for analysing capabilities and processes and improving them on a continual basis to achieve the stated objectives and stakeholder satisfaction.
Counselling	The provision of academic, personal, and emotional support and guidance to learners.
Course	A planned series of learning experiences in a particular subject/discipline offered by an institution; a self-contained, formally structured unit of a programme of study.
Course completion rate	Percentage of students in the total enrolment for the course/programme who have satisfactorily completed the prescribed requirements of a given course/programme.
Course materials	Materials in print or electronic format which are provided to the learner to support the achievement of the intended learning outcomes.
Course specification	An officially approved concise description of a course of study which specifies course objectives, intended learning outcomes, course content, teaching-learning and assessment details including constructive alignment, grading system, recommended readings and the information on the programme for which the course is prescribed, department responsible for offering it, and prior-learning requirements.
Coursework	Work performed by students or trainees for the purpose of learning. Coursework may be specified and assigned by teachers,

	or by learning guides. Coursework can encompass a wide range of activities, including practice, experimentation, research, and writing (e.g., assignments, project reports, dissertations, book reports, and essays) carried out either individually or in small groups.
Credit	A unit used in the expression and calculation of the academic value/ volume of learning pertaining to the courses followed by a learner. The value of a credit is normally determined by the number of notional learning hours required to provide face to face instructions, assignments, practical, clinical, research and assessments, and self-study by students. According to Sri Lanka Qualification Framework, 1 credit is equivalent to 50 notional hours of learning.
Credit transfer	Transfer of credits (for learning) from one setting to another. This not only facilitates smooth transfer of learners from one programme to another and one institution to another but also enables transnational mobility.
Criteria	a set of pre-established standards for the functioning of a higher education institution that form the basis for evaluation and accreditation.
Culture of the institution	Norms, values, beliefs, and behaviours inherent in an institution and reflected in the functioning of the institution and its staff. The top management of the institution defines and creates the necessary environment for the institutional culture.
Curriculum	A standards-based sequence of planned experiences where students practice and achieve predefined learning outcomes to gain proficiency in content related to knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Curriculum is the central guide for all students and educators as to what is essential for teaching and learning, and assessment, so that every student achieves the core learning outcomes and content (including those related to research) through rigorous academic experiences.
Differently abled students	Students who have a physical or mental impairment that affects their ability to conduct normal day-to-day activities.
Distance Education	An educational process and system in which all or a significant proportion of the teaching is carried out by someone, or

	something removed in space and time from the learner. Requires structured planning, well-designed courses, special instructional techniques, and methods of communication by electronic and other technology, as well as specific organisational and administrative arrangements.
Distance learning	A system and a process that connects learners to distributed learning resources. All distance learning, however, is characterized by separation/ distance of place and/or time between instructor and learner, amongst learners, and/or between learners and learning resources conducted through one or more media.
Dropout	A term used for learners who cease to be active in their course of study before its completion.
Dual mode institution	An institution that offers learning opportunities in two modes: one using traditional classroom-based methods, the other using distance methods.
Educational Technology	Is the study and application of techniques, systems, tools, and media used in education and training.
Eligible examiners	Academics or professionals who meet the approved criteria for appointment as examiners for a specific programme or level of study.
Employability	Employability is the acquisition of attributes (knowledge, skills, and abilities) that make graduates more likely to be successful in their chosen occupations (whether paid employment or not)
Equitable access	The absence of differences in educational opportunity or achievement based on social class, ethnicity, caste, gender, disability, area of residence which are clearly preventable and unfair.
Ethics	The practice of applying a mutually agreed code of conduct based on moral principles to the day-to-day actions of individuals or groups within any organisation.
Evaluation	A periodic assessment of the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness impact and/or sustainability of an activity or intervention.
Examiner	A person authorised to set examinations or marking the answer scripts to assess the level of knowledge skills and attitudes of the examinees

Extension programmes/courses	Educational training/courses provided by universities to people who are not enrolled as regular students.
External peer review	The process through which the study programmes/ universities/ HEIs are critically assessed by independent relevant individuals unconnected to both the decision-making body and those who have prepared the material being assessed.
External quality Assurance (EQA)	Performed by an organisation external to the institution to assess the operation of the institution or its programmes to see whether it meets the predetermined standards.
External sources	Sources of information other than the sources that are internal to the institution seeking information.
Feedback mechanism	Systems for obtaining information from participants in a process that contributes to the assessment of its quality and effectiveness.
Feedback to learners	Formative and evaluative comments made to individual learners by their tutors in response to tasks or written assignments that enable learners to improve their learning.
Formal learning	Formal learning is planned learning that derives from activities within a structured learning setting
Formative assessment	Formative assessment is evaluation of student learning that aids understanding and development of knowledge, skills, and abilities without passing any final judgement (via recorded grade) on the level of learning.
Formative evaluation	Evaluation that occurs while a project or course is in progress, with the aim of identifying shortcomings in the course.
Full-time equivalent (FTE)	Full-time equivalent is the proportion of a nominal full-time student in higher education that a non-full-time student is judged to constitute
Generic skills	Skills that are fundamental to a class of activities and are transferable from one job or activity to another. Lists of generic skills usually include basic/fundamental skills such as literacy, numeracy, analytical skills, technical skills: people-related skills; conceptual skills; learning-to-learn skills; personal skills and attributes; innovative and entrepreneurial skills; entertainment skills etc.
Goal	A result, milestone or checkpoint which will indicate significant progress towards achieving the institutional mission at the end

	of any endeavour. A goal should be specific, measurable, critical for success and benchmarked.
Governance	Governance in higher education refers to the way in which institutions are organised and operate internally and their relationships with external entities with a view to securing the objectives of higher education as a realm of enquiry and critique
Governance structure	The system and structure for defining policy, providing leadership, managing, and coordinating the procedures and resources that ensure the quality of all the activities of the organisations (NCATE Standards – http://urlm.co/www.cqaie.org).
Graduate attributes	The knowledge, skills and attitudes an academic community agrees that its students should develop during their time with the institution as a result of learning they engage with their programme of study. These attributes could be subject specific or generic and have the potential to outlast the contexts/ disciplinary boundaries in which they were originally acquired.
Graduate Profile	Description of the threshold (minimum) levels of knowledge, skills, and attitudes that every graduate should achieve because of successful completion of a study programme. Graduate profiles are written at institutional and qualification level.
Grievance redressal	Mechanisms for receiving, processing, and addressing dissatisfaction expressed, complaints and other formal requests made by learners, staff and other stakeholders on the institutional provisions promised and perceived.
Handbook	A publication produced by a Faculty/HEI for prospective students giving details about the institution, its resources, its programmes/course offered including and admission requirements, codes of conduct for students, by-laws relating to discipline, etc.; this may also be referred as Student handbook provided by an HEI for registered students of an institution containing information on all matters relevant to students for their academic progress in the institution.
Hybrid modes of teaching	A mixture of digital and on-campus teaching, where students may be able to attend on-campus sessions, digital sessions in the same time zone.

Independent learning	Instructional system in which learners are encouraged to carry out their studies beyond the classroom instruction so as to prepare students for lifelong learning.
Independent study	Mode of learning in which learners work through their study materials independently of other learners.
Induction	Is the process by which learners are helped to understand the requirements, learning skills, mode of operation etc. of a course or programme.
Induction/ Orientation programme	The process by which learners are introduced to a new organisation/ environment; the learners are informed of their responsibilities, commitments, the study programme, facilities provided, expected conduct and behaviour, etc.
Informal learning	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Learning that derives from activities external to a structured learning context.2. Unstructured learning within a structured learning environment.
Innovation	New knowledge/ technique/ tool generated through experimentation that will add value to product / tool / techniques or improve efficiency of a process/ technique/ service.
Inputs	Products, services, and prepared materials used to produce the desired outcomes.
Institutional research	Collection, analysis, reporting of quantitative and qualitative data about an institution's students, faculty, staff, curriculum, course offerings and learning outcomes to inform institutional decision-making and planning.
Institutional Review Report (IRR)	Compiled by the peer review team is the outcome of an Institutional Review and provides a concise account of the review process and findings supported by evidence, an analysis of the issues identified together with the team's conclusions on the level of accomplishment of the institution in terms of quality of its educational provision.
Institutionalisation	Formalisation or internalisation or adoption of a practice/ guidelines/ values/ norms which would add value to the institutional procedures and practices.

Instructional design	The practice of systematically designing, developing, and delivering instructional products and experiences, both digital and physical, in a consistent and reliable fashion toward an efficient, effective, appealing, engaging, and inspiring acquisition of knowledge.
Instructional package	All essential study materials for a course.
Intellectual Property Rights (IPR)	Temporary grants of monopoly intended to give economic incentives for innovative and creative activity. IPR exist in the form of patents, copyrights, and trademarks.
Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)	Intended Learning Outcomes define what a learner will have acquired and will be able to do upon successfully completing their studies. ILOs should be expressed from the students' perspective and are measurable, achievable, and assessable. ILO is a generic term that can be used to represent programme learning outcomes (PLOs), course learning outcomes (clos) or lesson learning outcomes (ILOs).
Interactivity	There are two kinds of interactivity viz: learning material interactivity involving the learner's interaction with the medium, and the immediacy of feedback the medium itself provides, and the extent to which the medium will accommodate learner's own input and direction and social interactivity; extent to which learners interact with teachers and with each other via a given medium.
Interdisciplinary	Integrating knowledge and methods from different disciplines, using a real synthesis of approaches.
Interdisciplinary study	An integrative approach in which information from more than one discipline is used in interpreting the content of a subject, phenomenon, theory, or principle.
Internal Quality Assurance (IQA)	Internal system of monitoring to ensure that policies and mechanisms are in place and to make sure that it is meeting its own objectives and predetermined standards.
Internal review	Internal assessment or review process commissioned regularly by the institution to assure internalisation of best practices and achieving the standards/ benchmarks with respect to its governance and management, and study programmes and allied activities.

Internalisation	The process of making something internal, with more specific meanings in various fields Refer to Institutionalisation.
Language support services	Range of language related assistance provided to students to facilitate acquisition of skills in academic writing, verbal communication and learning required for the programme of study.
Learner support	A supportive network of preparatory courses, skill development opportunities, personal and academic counselling to meet learner's needs through a flexible approach to resources including individualised support from the teacher/facilitator.
Learner support services	Physical and academic facilities made available to enable every learner to achieve the stated ILOs through online support, tutor support, library and information services, laboratories, and administrative support.
Learner-centred education	A system of education where the learner is at the centre of education with responsibility for learning while the teacher functions as the facilitator of learning.
Learning centres	Offices or buildings maintained by open and distance learning programmes in order to provide localised delivery of learning materials and support to learners.
Learning environment	The place and setting where learning occurs. A virtual learning environment is one in which a student is provided with tools and resources to learn both autonomously and with a virtual cohort of learners.
Learning outcomes	Statements of what a learner is expected to know and/or be able to do at the end of a period of learning.
Learning resources	The resources of the learning process which may be used by a learner (in isolation or with other learners) to facilitate learning.
Lifelong learning	A philosophical concept in which learning is viewed as a long-term process beginning at birth and lasting throughout life; a conceptual framework within which the learning needs of people of all ages, educational and occupational levels may be met, regardless of circumstances; a process of accomplishing personal, social, and professional development throughout the lifespan of individuals to enhance the quality of life.

Management Information System (MIS)	A computerised integrated information collection, collation, analysis, and reporting system to support institutional management and decision-making processes.
Market research	Activities undertaken by an institution to determine the demand for its programmes and services.
Mission	The overall function or purpose of an institution.
Modular curricula	Courses offered in units which are complete in themselves.
Module	A module is a formal learning experience encapsulated into a unit of study, usually linked to other modules to create a programme of study.
Monitoring	A management function that operates during programme implementation to carry out a continuous or on-going collection and analysis of information about implementation, and to review programmes with a view to correcting problems as they arise. It is an internal activity that is the responsibility of those who manage implementation procedures thus representing good management practices.
Multimedia	Learning technologies that involve the whole range of audio, visual, text and graphics media available, integrated into a package that has been effectively designed from an instructional perspective.
Needs analysis	A process of identifying the learning and training needs of a particular group or population.
Non-formal learning	Non-formal learning involves a structured or semi-structured learning environment but does not lead to formalised certification.
Online programme	Online programmes are those available as accessed via the Internet
Open access	A way of providing learning opportunities that implies a lack of formal entry requirements, prerequisite credentials, or an entrance examination.
Open and Distance Learning	A way of providing learning opportunities characterised by the separation of teacher and learner in time and/or place; learning that is certified in some way by an institution or agency; the use of a variety of media, including print and electronic; two-way communications that allow learners and tutors to interact; the

	possibility of occasional face to face meetings between tutor and learners; and a specialised division of labour in the production and delivery of courses.
Open educational resources	Educational resources offered freely and openly for anyone to use and under some licences to re-mix, improve and re-distribute.
Open learning	An educational philosophy that also emphasises giving learners choices about media, place of study, support mechanisms and entry and exit points.
Organisational chart / Organogram	A diagram that shows the structure of an organisation and the relationships and relative ranks of its parts and positions/jobs.
Organisational structure	A framework that shows the divisions of an organisation and reveals vertical responsibilities and horizontal linkages and may be represented by an organisation chart.
Orientation	A process through which a new student or employee is integrated into an institution, learning about its culture, policies and procedures, and the specific practicalities of his or her programme of study or job.
Outcomes-based approach	An outcomes-based approach to learning and teaching specifies in advance what the student should be able to do at the culmination of a programme of study
Outputs	Products, materials, services, or information arising out of a particular process.
Outreach	The provision of programmes, services, activities and /or expertise to those outside the traditional university community. Outreach is a one-way process in which the university is the provider either on a gratis basis or with an associated charge.
Outreach programmes/activities	A systematic attempt to provide services beyond the conventional limits of institutional provision to segments of a community e.g., educational programmes for illiterate adults.
Participatory management	A system of institutional management in which every member of the institution is involved at one stage or the other in the decision-making process.
Partner institutions/organisations	Key institutions/organisations which are working in collaboration with another institution to achieve a common goal or to improve performance.

Partnership/alliance	A formal arrangement between two partners for a specific purpose; It is both a strategy and a formal relationship between the university and another major provider that engenders cooperation for the benefit of both parties and the student population at large.
Peer assessment	A method of assessment that is based on the consensus opinion of a peer group of learners on the respective contributions made to the work of the group by everyone.
Peer-Guided Study Groups	A group of students or a comfortable learning community guided by a peer to boost their learning and support their course success
Peer Review	Peer review is the process of evaluating the provision, work process, or output of an individual or collective who operating in the same milieu as the reviewer(s)
Performance appraisal	A systematic assessment of an employee’s performance in order to determine his/her achievement of assigned tasks, training needs, potential for promotion, eligibility for merit increment etc.
Performance indicator	quantifiable indicator of progress that allows the institution, department, or unit to demonstrate that desired results are being achieved
Policy	A statement of principles or intentions which serve as continuing guidelines for management in accomplishing the institution’s mission, goals, and objectives.
Postgraduate Programme Management Unit (PGPMU)	Academic entity responsible for the delivery of the postgraduate study programme (Faculty/ Department/ BOS).
Postgraduate Programme Provider (PGPP)	Administrative entity responsible for the registration of the postgraduate (PGI/FGS/Faculty) or the Degree awarding entity (University/HEI).
Print media	Printed materials, as distinguished from broadcast, or electronically transmitted communications.
Prior learning	What has been learnt by an individual prior to enrolment in a particular programme by means of knowledge or skills acquired in an educational institution or previous experience gained from a workplace.

Process	A set of interrelated work activities characterised by a set of specific inputs and activities to achieve specific outputs/tasks.
Professional body	An entity that is dedicated to the advancement of knowledge and practice of a profession through developing, supporting, regulating, and promoting professional standards for technical and ethical competence; A group of people in a learned occupation who are entrusted with maintaining control or oversight of the legitimate practice of the occupation.
Programme	Structured teaching-learning opportunities which lead to an award; Refers to all activities that engage students in learning.
Programme Learning Outcomes	Programme Learning Outcomes (PLOs) describe the essential knowledge, skills, and attitudes that the graduates of the programme should be able to demonstrate upon successfully completing the programme.
Programme of study	A stand-alone, officially approved curriculum (which includes course work or research) followed by a student, which leads to a qualification awarded by a higher education institution.
Programme specification	A general overview of the structure and other key aspects of the programme, including concise description of the programme with respect to its aims, objectives, intended learning outcomes, volume of learning in terms of credits, courses, course contents, recommended readings, teaching, learning assessment procedures, responsible department, grading system, learner support, entry requirements, fallback options, requirements for the award of the degree.
Progression	Vertical movement of learners from one level of education to the next higher level successfully or towards gainful employment.
Prospectus	A publication produced by an institution for prospective students giving details about itself, its programmes, courses, and admission requirements.
Qualification	Qualification is the award to which a formal programme of study contributes.
Qualifications framework	A qualifications framework sets out all qualifications covered by the range of the framework as a hierarchy with generic descriptors of the required achievement to attain the qualification

Quality	The fitness for purpose of a product or service according to a set of required standards, with minimum cost to society.
Quality Assessment	A process of evaluation of performance of an institution or its unit based on certain established criteria.
Quality Assurance	The policies and procedures by which the universities can guarantee with confidence and certainty that standard of its awards and quality of its education provision and knowledge generation are being maintained. It also refers to the process of maintaining standards reliably and consistently by applying criteria of success in a course, programme, or institution.
Quality culture	Quality culture is a set of group values that guide how improvements are made to everyday working practices and consequent outputs
Quality enhancement	Continuous institutional effort to achieve higher level of performance and quality that is understood to be reasonably better than which prevailed earlier. It is also defined as enhancing performance efficiency of a HEI/system.
Quality review (external)	A systematic, independent examination by a third party to determine whether the institutional practices with respect to its governance and management, physical and human resources, academic development and planning, academic programmes and courses, teaching and learning, and assessment, learner support services and other allied activities and provisions comply with predefined quality dimensions (i.e., criteria, best practices, and standards).
Ranking	Ranking is a term used to refer to the rating and ordering of higher education institutions or programmes of study based on various criteria
Recognition	Recognition is the formal acknowledgement of the status of an organisation, institution, or programme
Regulatory agencies	Government or quasi government agencies with responsibility for the overall planning and monitoring of the educational provision of institutions commonly under their purview.
Research	Rigorous intellectual activity which involves systematic investigation to generate new knowledge.

Review	1. Review is a generic term for any process that explores the quality of higher education or 2. Review refers to explorations of quality that do not result in judgements or decisions.
Review judgement	A conclusion arrived at by a peer review team of a university's overall effectiveness regarding quality.
Review team	The review team is the group of people undertaking a quality monitoring or evaluation process
Safety guidelines	Rules that need to be followed by students during learning activities in the laboratory, studios, or field to ensure protection from injury.
Self-appraisal	Individual's or institution's evaluation of own performance.
Self-assessment	A process in which learners answer questions or carry out prescribed activities to determine whether expected learning has occurred.
Self-Evaluation Report (SER)	A document prepared by the HEI providing a description and analysis with supporting evidence of the effectiveness with which the HEI discharges its responsibility for academic standards and adherence to good practices.
Site visit	A site visit is when an external evaluation team goes to an institution to evaluate verbal, written and visual evidence
Skill	Skill is the ability to perform a task adeptly, using experience and professional knowledge
Sri Lanka Qualification Framework (SLQF)	A comprehensive document published by the Ministry of Higher Education, outlining a nationally consistent framework for all higher education qualifications offered in Sri Lanka, recognizing the volume of learning of students, and identifying the learning outcomes that are to be achieved by qualification holders. Its objective is to have a uniform system in naming a qualification, the designators, and qualifiers of each qualification awarded by HEIS in Sri Lanka
Staff development	Skills development, refresher programmes or other training provided for staff within or outside the institution to enable them to continuously update their knowledge and skills for effective and efficient performance and career advancement.
Stakeholder	A stakeholder is a person (or group) that has an interest in the activities of an institution or organisation

Standard Operational Procedures (SOPs)	Operational procedures developed and adopted by the governing authority/council of the Institution/higher educational institution by adhering to Acts, Ordinances, Circulars, Establishment Codes, and letters issued by Parliament, Ministries, and regulatory agencies, as the case may be, to guide the stakeholders to undertake their core functions; these are essential prerequisites for ensuring good governance and management.
Standards	Measurable indicators that provide the basis of comparison for making judgements concerning the performance of an instructional activity, programme, or institution.
Statistical analysis	The use of statistical data including varying variables, entities, and events to determine probabilistic or statistical relationships in quantitative manner
Strategic plan	A specific and action-oriented, medium, or long-term plan of the University/HEI to progress towards achieving a set of institutional goals as dictated by its mission and vision.
Student engagement	The degree of attention, curiosity, interest, optimism, and passion that students show when they are learning or being taught, which extends to the level of motivation they have to learn and progress in their education.
Student evaluation	Student evaluation has two meanings: 1. Student evaluation is an assessment by learners of the service provided by the institution, be it solely of the classroom experience or of all aspects of the learning experience; 2. In some countries, such as the United States, 'student evaluation' has the same meaning as assessment of students' learning
Student experience	The student experience is primarily the nature of the engagement of students with learning and teaching however it may also include other aspects that impinge on learning some of which are the responsibility of higher education institutions
Student feedback	Gathering response/criticism from students at the end of a study program or an individual course unit for improving and refining the education that the HEI provides; the strategies for gathering feedback from students may range from informal discussions

	with students to the use of feedback forms containing a mix of free-responses and quantitative questions using Likert scales.
Student handbook	An information book for registered students of an institution containing information on all matters relevant to students for their academic progress in the institution.
Student support services	Refer to Learner support services.
Student: Tutor ratio	The average number of students assigned to an individual tutor across a programme or institution.
Student-Centred Learning (SCL)	Refer to Learner-centred education
Students with special needs	Learners who require additional support or specialised services due to long- or short-term physical or mental impairment(s) that affect their ability to perform normal day-to-day activities.
Subject Benchmark Statement (SBS)	Reference point that provides a description of a particular subject/discipline describing its general academic characteristics and standards and articulating the attributes that a graduate should be able to demonstrate. It describes expectations about the standard of awards in a subject/discipline and what gives a subject/discipline its coherence and identity. Subject Benchmarks are used when developing or revising course syllabi.
Summative assessment	Assessment of learning that takes place on completion of the learning activity or activities.
Summative evaluation	Evaluation that occurs at the completion of a course or project, which provides a summary account of its effectiveness and the extent to which it meets its goals and objectives.
Survey	The act of examining a process or questioning a selected sample of individuals to obtain data about a process, product, or service.
Total Quality Management	A comprehensive approach for improving competitiveness, effectiveness, and flexibility through planning, organising, and understanding each activity and involving everyone at each level.
Tracer Studies	Graduate survey methods conducted by an HEI to evaluate the relevance of their educational programmes in terms of employability and professional development of its graduates. Tracer studies are conducted using questionnaires to obtain information from former graduates about the state of their employment, labour market signals, professional success,

	retrospective evaluation of study programmes, curricular development, continuing education etc. Sri Lankan HEIs are encouraged to conduct tracer studies to evaluate and improve the relevance of their study programmes.
Transparency	Institutional processes that are characterised by openness, communication and clearly assigned accountability.
Tutoring	An interactive approach to disseminating knowledge that helps students to improve their learning strategies in order to promote empowerment and independent learning.
Validation	Process of confirming the appropriateness of something; determination of the effectiveness of instructional materials or system by the use of appropriate summative evaluation techniques.
Virtual education	Virtual education is delivered, usually via information technology networks, without restricting the learner in space or time
Virtual Learning Environment (VLE)	Is a set of teaching and learning tools designed to enhance a student's learning experience by including computers and the Internet in the learning process.
Vision	A short memorable statement that paints a vivid picture of an ambitious, desirable future state aligned with institutional values. Its purpose is to inspire and act as a guide for decision-making and planning.
Work-based learning	Work-based learning refers to any formal higher education learning that is based wholly or predominantly in a work setting
Work-integrated learning	Work-integrated learning allows students to combine learning in a higher education institution with learning in (or related to) an external work setting
Work-related learning	Work-related learning refers to any formal higher education learning that includes a period of learning that takes place in a work setting or involves activities linked to a work setting.

Notes on Authors

Professor Emeritus E.R. Kalyani Perera is a former Senior Professor in Animal Science, University of Peradeniya. She earned PhD Animal Sciences (1986) and MS Dairy Science (1983) from Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, USA, and BSc Agriculture Honours (1977) from University of Sri Lanka. During her 40-year long academic career she has published ~100 research articles, authored six book chapters, a textbook, and a dictionary. She has served as the President of National Agricultural Association of Sri Lanka (2001) and President of Sri Lanka Association of Animal Science (2008-2011). Currently, she is a Council Member of University of Moratuwa and Academic Consultant of Gampaha Wickramarachchi University. Being involved in quality assurance activities since 2002, she has served as a reviewer, a resource person, a member of expert panels, Acting Director of Quality Assurance Council of the UGC (2020-2021), National Quality Assurance Consultant of Universities (2012-2016), Quality Assurance Consultant of Sri Jayewardenepura University (2017-2018) and Council Member of Uva Wellassa University (2019-2020). She has contributed to formulate manuals for Institutional Review (2015), Programme Review (2015), External Degrees (2014), Subject Benchmark Statements, and Sri Lanka Qualification Framework (2015), and co-authored Postgraduate Programme Review Manual (2021).

Dr. B. D. Nandadeva is a retired professor who was affiliated with the University of Kelaniya. He received his PhD in Art Conservation Research from the University of Delaware, USA, MSc from the University of Moratuwa, Graduate Diploma from the University of Canberra, Australia, and BA (Hons.) from the University of Ceylon. He conducted research at the University of Thessaloniki, Greece, the Freer Gallery of the Smithsonian Institution, Sojo University, Japan, and the Courtauld Institute of Art, University of London. At Kelaniya, he has served as Department Head, Director of Staff Development, Deputy Director of Student Affairs, Member of the Internal Quality Assurance Unit, Coordinator of the HETC-UDG Project, and a member of numerous Senate and Faculty Sub-committees. He is currently an advisor to the Standing Committee of the Quality Assurance Council. He co-authored the three previous manuals for Institutional Review (2015), Undergraduate Study Programme Review (2015) and Postgraduate Study Program (2021).

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