



Quality Assurance Policy University of South Asia

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1. Introduction

1.1. Purpose of the Policy

The Quality Assurance Policy of the University of South Asia is established to provide a structured framework for ensuring, maintaining, and enhancing the quality of academic and administrative functions across the University. This policy sets forth the principles, procedures, and responsibilities that govern the quality assurance system in alignment with national and international standards. It is designed to foster a culture of continuous improvement, promote academic excellence, ensure accountability, and enhance institutional performance in all spheres of higher education delivery.

1.2. Scope and Applicability

This policy is applicable to all academic programs, teaching and learning processes, research activities, administrative functions, and support services at the University. It applies to:

- i. All faculties, departments, and academic units,
- ii. All administrative and support services,
- iii. Faculty and non-academic staff,
- iv. Current and prospective students,
- v. Institutional collaborations and external stakeholders, where applicable.

The policy is intended to ensure that every aspect of University functioning contributes to the overall mission of delivering high-quality education, producing impactful research, and serving the community effectively.

1.3. Alignment

The policy is grounded in the Pakistan Precepts, Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (PSG-2023) issued by the Higher Education Commission (HEC) of Pakistan and international best practices. It reflects the core values and principles such as academic integrity, learner-centeredness, transparency, inclusivity, and evidence-based decision-making. The University of South Asia commits to:

- i. Implementing robust internal quality assurance mechanisms,
- ii. Establishing clear and measurable Key Performance Indicators (KPIs),
- iii. Ensuring stakeholder participation in quality assurance processes,
- iv. Complying with national quality standards and striving for international benchmarks,
- v. Undertaking regular quality audits, self-assessments, and policy reviews.

2. Quality Assurance Philosophy

2.1. Vision and Mission Statements

2.1.1. Vision:

To be a nationally and internationally recognized institution that upholds the highest standards of quality in teaching, research, and service, through a robust and dynamic quality assurance system.

2.1.2. Mission:

The mission of quality assurance at the University of South Asia is to cultivate a culture of excellence by systematically monitoring, evaluating, and enhancing academic and administrative practices. The University is committed to ensuring that its graduates are equipped with the knowledge, skills, and values needed to thrive in a competitive global environment while contributing meaningfully to national development.

2.2. Core Values and Principles

The Quality Assurance framework of the University of South Asia is anchored in the following core values and principles:

- i. Academic Integrity: Upholding honesty, ethics, and accountability in all academic and administrative processes.
- ii. Student-Centeredness: Placing students at the heart of all educational planning, delivery, and evaluation efforts.
- iii. Transparency and Accountability: Ensuring openness in decision-making and responsibility in actions at all levels.
- iv. Equity and Inclusiveness: Promoting equal access, participation, and opportunity for all stakeholders regardless of background.
- v. Excellence and Innovation: Striving for the highest standards of performance through continuous improvement and creative approaches.
- vi. Stakeholder Engagement: Encouraging collaboration and feedback from internal and external stakeholders including students, faculty, alumni, and industry partners.
- vii. Evidence-Based Decision Making: Using data and analysis to guide planning, implementation, and improvement.

2.3. Commitment to Continuous Improvement

The University of South Asia is firmly committed to the principle of continuous improvement as a cornerstone of quality assurance. This commitment is reflected in:

- i. Regular program review cycles and curriculum updates based on feedback from all stakeholders and emerging trends.
- ii. Periodic performance evaluations of faculty and staff, followed by professional development.
- iii. Institutional self-assessment and internal quality audits.
- iv. Development and monitoring of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for academic and administrative units.
- v. Integration of stakeholder feedback into planning and decision-making processes.
- vi. Timely implementation of corrective actions based on quality reviews and evaluations.

By embedding continuous improvement in institutional culture, the University ensures that its academic offerings remain relevant, its services efficient, and its impact sustainable.

3. Governance and Organizational Structure

The Quality Enhancement Cell office (QEC) has been renamed as the office of Institutional Quality Assessment and Enhancement and (IQAE).

3.1. Role of the IQAE

The IQAE is the central body responsible for implementing and overseeing the quality assurance framework at the University. The IQAE operates as a strategic unit reporting directly to the Vice Chancellor. Its core responsibilities include:

- i. Developing and implementing quality assurance policies, procedures, and practices;
- ii. Monitoring academic standards and program quality across faculties and departments;
- iii. Conducting institutional performance evaluations and academic audits;
- iv. Coordinating the self-assessment process for academic programs;
- v. Organizing training, workshops, and capacity-building sessions on quality assurance;
- vi. Collecting and analysing feedback from students, faculty, alumni, and employers;
- vii. Liaising with HEC and other regulatory bodies on matters related to quality assurance.
- viii. Any role assigned to the IQAE with regards to Quality Assurance by IQC (Institutional Quality Circle).

3.2. The Institutional Quality Circle (IQC)

The IQC is a key tool for the IQAE in establishing a quality culture within the University. It is chaired by the Vice Chancellor and facilitated by the IQAE. Aside from ratifying the institutional self-evaluation, the IQC meets four times a year in its role as the ultimate delegated authority for the management of quality assurance at the University.

Terms of reference for the Institutional Quality Circle (IQC)

- i. To monitor all relevant external guidance and requirements related to quality assurance, initiating and coordinating action as appropriate.
- ii. To develop and keep under review the university's Academic Policy and Quality Framework, that is, the systems, policies and guidance for assuring and enhancing the quality of students' learning experience and maintaining academic standards, and to consider and manage the outcomes of these processes.
- iii. To have oversight of the university's approach to assuring the completeness, accuracy, reliability and fitness for purpose of information provided for applicants and students.
- iv. To maintain operational oversight of academic and student-related policy and legislation, considering proposals for minor and operational legislative changes, consulting with legal services as appropriate.
- v. To consider proposals for the addition, withdrawal, suspension, and exceptional amendment of programmes of study of the University. This will normally be undertaken by Chair's action for regular reporting to a subsequent meeting of the committee.

3.3. IQC Membership

- i. **Vice Chancellor (Chair)**
- ii. Head of IQAE (member/secretary)
- iii. All Faculty Deans
- iv. All Heads of Academic Department
- v. Controller of Examinations
- vi. Treasurer
- vii. Student Council representative (2)

3.4. Responsibilities of Academic and Administrative Departments

All academic and administrative departments within the University share the responsibility of upholding the quality assurance policy. Their key responsibilities include:

- i. Ensuring compliance with university-wide quality assurance procedures;
- ii. Actively participating in program reviews and accreditation processes;
- iii. Maintaining up-to-date records of teaching, assessment, and program outcomes;
- iv. Facilitating internal and external audits;
- v. Engaging in regular self-assessment and continuous improvement initiatives;
- vi. Encouraging faculty development and pedagogical innovation;
- vii. Providing timely and accurate data to IQAE for institutional reporting.

Heads of departments, deans, and directors are directly accountable for implementing quality assurance mechanisms within their respective units.

4. Academic Quality Assurance

4.1. Program Design and Approval Processes

The University of South Asia is committed to offering high-quality academic programs that are developed through a rigorous, consultative, and evidence-based process. All new programs are initiated only after confirming their permissibility under the University's Charter or Act. Each program is designed to align with the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), respond to market needs, and ensure academic and intellectual integrity.

The program design and approval process include the following key stages:

- i. **Needs Assessment**
A comprehensive needs assessment is conducted by the concerned department prior to program development. This includes:
 - a. Program rationale & business case, market analysis to identify current and future skill demands
 - b. Consultation with key stakeholders including students, alumni, employers, and industry experts
 - c. Benchmarking with comparable programs at national and international institutions

- ii. **Curriculum Development**
Curricula are collaboratively developed by academic faculty, subject matter experts, and relevant industry professionals to ensure relevance, rigor, and alignment with intended learning outcomes. Where applicable, the curriculum recommended by the HEC - National Curriculum Revision Committee (NCRC) or relevant Accreditation Council is adopted, with contextual modifications aligned with the University's mission, provided such changes are permissible under the HCE/council's guidelines.
- iii. **Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs)**
Each program includes clearly defined Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) that:
 - a. Correspond with appropriate NQF level descriptors
 - b. Reflect the department's academic mission and the University's graduate attributes
 - c. Address evolving employer expectations, global perspective and local societal needs
- iv. **Approval Workflow**
The approval of a new program follows a multi-tiered review process to ensure academic quality and legal compliance:
 - a. Initial proposal prepared by the department and endorsed by the Faculty Dean
 - b. Evaluation by the Office of the Registrar and the IQAE to ensure regulatory and QA standards are met
 - c. Review by the Departmental Curriculum Review Committee (CRC)
 - d. Endorsement by the Board of Faculty
 - e. Final approval by the Academic Council and the Board of Governors (BOG)
 - f. No Objection Certificate (NOC), if applicable, is obtained from the Higher Education Commission (HEC) and/or relevant Accreditation Council before program launch
- v. **Registration in Pakistan Qualification Register (PQR)**
Following program approval and NOC issuance, the Controller of Examinations ensures timely registration of the new program in the Pakistan Qualification Register (PQR) maintained by HEC.

4.2. Curriculum Development and Review Mechanisms

Curriculum development at the University of South Asia is a dynamic, continuous process that ensures academic offerings remain current, competitive, and responsive to societal changes and technological advancements. Following is the curriculum review mechanism:

- i. **Periodic Review Cycle:** The departments review and update the curriculum every 2 years, or earlier if required by regulatory changes, market needs, or stakeholder feedback.
- ii. **Stakeholder Involvement:** The office of IQEA and departments take feedback from students, alumni, faculty, industry experts, and employers

- in the review process and based on their input the revisions are suggested in the curriculum.
- iii. Benchmarking: The department does the comparison of curricula with top local and international universities to ensure global competitiveness.
 - iv. Integration of Key Themes from the mission of the University are incorporated:
 - a. Ethical practices and social responsibility.
 - b. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
 - c. Entrepreneurial and digital competencies.
 - d. Inclusion of emerging disciplines such as Artificial Intelligence, Data Science, and Climate Change (where relevant).
 - v. Approval Process: Proposed curriculum revisions undergo the same approval workflow as new program design, ensuring oversight at multiple levels.

4.3. Teaching and Learning Standards

The University is committed to maintaining high standards in teaching and learning by implementing learner-cantered, inclusive, and outcome-based educational (OBE) strategies. Our teaching processes are designed to cultivate critical thinking, problem-solving skills, creativity, and promote lifelong learning among students. Key teaching and learning standards are:

- i. Faculty Qualifications:
The Registrar's Office ensures strict compliance with the minimum eligibility criteria for teaching positions as defined by the Higher Education Commission (HEC) and the relevant professional councils.
- ii. Pedagogical Approaches
The University is actively transitioning to an Outcome-Based Education (OBE) framework across all programs. Departments ensure clear alignment between Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs) and assessment rubrics. Faculty members receive training and are encouraged to engage students through active learning methodologies such as project-based learning, case studies, flipped classrooms, and blended learning. Additionally, the use of digital tools is promoted, including providing video-recorded lectures via the Learning Management System (LMS), to supplement course materials and support student learning.
- iii. Course Files Documentation:
The office of the Institutional Quality Assurance and Enhancement (IQAE) ensures the systematic maintenance and regular updating of course files, lesson plans, and syllabi for all courses offered during regular semesters.
- iv. Classroom Observations and Evaluation:
Departments, in collaboration with IQAE, conduct regular evaluations of teaching effectiveness. This process includes gathering student feedback through surveys, peer reviews via random classroom observations, and annual self-assessments by faculty members.

4.4. Assessment and Evaluation

Assessment at the University is designed to be transparent, fair, reliable, and aligned with defined learning outcomes.

i. Alignment with Outcome-Based Education and Bloom's Taxonomy

The University's is striving to align its assessment framework with the Outcome-Based Education (OBE) system, utilizing Bloom's Taxonomy to evaluate student achievement at multiple cognitive levels. This ensures that Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs) are effectively measured and attained.

ii. Formative Assessment

Formative assessments, such as quizzes, assignments, presentations, practical work, group discussions, and mid-semester evaluations, are designed to provide ongoing learning opportunities and constructive feedback to students throughout the course.

iii. Summative Assessment

Summative assessments evaluate cumulative learning and include mid-term and final examinations, capstone projects, thesis work, and comprehensive viva voce examinations where applicable, reflecting students' mastery of course content.

iv. Grading and Evaluation

The University employs pre-defined grading rubrics and marking schemes, which are communicated to students at the beginning of each course to ensure transparency. Examination papers and evaluated scripts undergo moderation to guarantee fairness and consistency in grading.

v. Academic Integrity and Plagiarism Control

Strict adherence to academic integrity is maintained through mandatory plagiarism checks, alongside enforcement of Anti-plagiarism, Ethical use of Generative AI policies and strict examination conduct regulations.

vi. Feedback Mechanisms

Timely and meaningful feedback is provided to students, supporting their academic growth. The University incorporates feedback loops aimed at continuous improvement of courses and assessment methods.

5. Faculty Development and Evaluation

5.1. Professional Development Programs

Continuous professional development of faculty members is fundamental to maintaining academic quality and innovation. The IQAE in coordination with Center for Faculty Development the and relevant academic departments, shall ensure the implementation of structured training initiatives that enhance pedagogical effectiveness, research capability, leadership potential, and digital competency.

5.2. Establishment of the Center for Faculty Development (CFD)

5.2.1. Purpose and Rationale

To ensure academic excellence and continuous improvement in teaching and research practices, the University shall establish a Center for Faculty Development (CFD) as an integral part of its institutional quality assurance and enhancement framework. The CFD shall serve as the central unit responsible for planning, implementing, and monitoring professional development initiatives for faculty across all disciplines. Its core purpose is to strengthen teaching quality, research capacity, academic leadership, and technological integration in alignment with national higher education standards and international best practices.

5.2.2. FDO's Organizational Structure

The Center for Faculty Development (CFD) shall operate under the Office of Institutional Quality Assurance and Enhancement (IQAE) and report directly to the Director of IQAE. The office shall be led by a Head of Faculty Development, who may either be a dedicated full-time officer or a senior faculty member assigned this responsibility as an additional charge. The Head shall be supported by coordinators and administrative staff as required. In addition to the IQAE Office, the CFD shall collaborate closely with Deans, Heads of Departments, the Office of the Registrar, the Office of Research, Innovation and Commercialization (ORIC), Human Resources, and the Information Technology Department to ensure the effective and integrated delivery of faculty development programs across disciplines.

5.2.3. Core Functions and Responsibilities

The Center for Faculty Development shall be responsible for the following functions:

- i. Conducting periodic training needs assessments across departments in consultation with Deans and Heads of Departments.
- ii. Designing and implementing faculty development plans based on identified needs in pedagogy, research, and technology.
- iii. Organizing orientation and induction programs for all new faculty members.
- iv. Facilitating workshops, seminars, certification programs, and academic retreats in collaboration with internal and external resource persons.
- v. Supporting faculty participation in national and international academic development forums, including conferences, fellowships, and webinars.
- vi. Establishing structured mentorship systems to promote intergenerational collaboration and academic leadership development.
- vii. Monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of faculty development activities and using feedback to inform future planning.

While the CFD shall lead these initiatives, academic departments and administrative units should provide active support in faculty identification, nomination, and post-training follow-up.

5.2.4. Annual Plan, Implementation and Evaluation

The CFD shall prepare an annual implementation plan at the start of each academic year, outlining key initiatives, expected outcomes, timelines, and resource requirements and submit it to the Office of IQAE for review. The Director IQAE shall get the plan approved from the Institutional Quality Circle (IQC) for its effective implementation throughout the year. The CFD shall submit an annual report to the IQC, documenting achievements, participation rates, challenges encountered, and recommendations for future improvement.

The IQAE Office shall be responsible for auditing the performance of the CFD in line with the University's academic quality assurance standards. The effectiveness of faculty development programs should be assessed using indicators such as post-training evaluations, faculty satisfaction, impact on teaching practices, student feedback, and research output. The annual performance evaluation report shall be submitted to the Vice Chancellor for his review and necessary action.

5.2.5. Resource Allocation and Sustainability

The University shall ensure the provision of adequate financial, human, and technological resources for the operational effectiveness of the FDO. Budget allocations shall cover program design, expert facilitation, printing of participation certificates, digital infrastructure, and external engagement opportunities. Where possible, the CFD should pursue external funding through partnerships, sponsorships, and national or international grant agencies to expand and sustain the scope of faculty development efforts.

5.2.6. Faculty Development Trainers and their Roles

The effectiveness of the Center for Faculty Development (CFD) depends significantly on the quality and expertise of the trainers engaged in delivering development programs. Trainers may be internal or external subject-matter experts selected based on their academic qualifications, training experience, and relevance to the development goals of the institution.

i. Internal Trainers

Qualified senior faculty members, Deans, department heads, or academic leaders within the University who possess demonstrated excellence in teaching, research, assessment design, curriculum development, or educational leadership. These individuals may be selected by CFD through a selection process.

ii. External Trainers

CFD shall engage with national or international experts, consultants, or certified professionals affiliated with Higher Education Commissions, accreditation bodies, research institutions, other Universities or professional organizations. These trainers are engaged to bring external perspectives, benchmark standards, and advanced pedagogical practices to the University's faculty.

5.3. Trainer Evaluation and Reporting

All trainers shall work in alignment with the objectives and guidelines of the FDO. Internal trainers shall submit a post-training report detailing session content, participation, challenges, and outcomes. External trainers shall be provided a training brief and expected deliverables by the CFD in advance. The CFD shall evaluate trainer effectiveness through participant feedback and align future engagements accordingly.

6. Student Support and Engagement

6.1. Academic Advising

The University shall provide comprehensive academic advising and counselling services to support students in achieving academic success, personal wellbeing, and career development. These services shall foster an inclusive, supportive environment that encourages student engagement, retention, and holistic growth.

6.1.1. Assignment of Academic Advisors

Academic Advisors shall be formally assigned to students by the respective Academic Departments at the beginning of each academic year or semester, coordinated by the Head of Department (HoD) or designated Academic Coordinator. The assignment process shall follow these steps:

- i. The Academic Department shall prepare a list of qualified faculty members eligible to serve as advisors based on their expertise, workload, and availability.
- ii. Each student shall be matched with an advisor from their enrolled program, ensuring an appropriate advisor-to-student ratio i.e. 1:35 for undergraduate students and 1:12 for graduate students to allow effective engagement.
- iii. The department shall notify both the advisor and the student of the assignment via official email, LMS or notice boards within the first two weeks of the semester.
- iv. A central record of advisor assignments shall be maintained by the Office of Student Affairs for administrative tracking and quality assurance.

6.2. Advising Process

6.2.1. Calling the Meeting

Academic Advisors shall initiate the first orientation meeting within the first month of the student's enrollment or semester start. The meeting invitation shall be communicated through email, the university's Learning Management System (LMS), or official notice boards.

6.2.2. Orientation Meeting Coverage

The initial orientation session shall cover:

- i. Program learning outcomes and degree requirements.
- ii. Course registration procedures and deadlines.

- iii. University academic policies including attendance, grading, and academic integrity.
- iv. Introduction to available student support services (library, IT, counselling, career services).
- v. Expectations for student responsibilities and advisor-advisee communication.

6.2.3. Scheduling Subsequent Meetings

Advisors shall schedule follow-up meetings at least once per semester or more frequently if required, based on the student's needs or academic progress. Scheduling shall be flexible, allowing for in-person, virtual, or phone meetings to accommodate student availability.

6.2.4. Discussion Topics in Meeting

During advising sessions, discussions shall include:

- i. Review of completed and pending coursework and credits.
- ii. Planning course selection for upcoming semesters, ensuring prerequisite fulfilment.
- iii. Addressing academic challenges or obstacles faced by the student.
- iv. Guidance on internship, research, or extracurricular opportunities (clubs and societies) aligned with career goals.
- v. Referrals to counselling or additional support services if non-academic issues affect performance.

6.3. Course Planning and Monitoring

Academic Advisors shall monitor students' academic progress by reviewing grades, attendance, and feedback from teachers. Interventions may include:

- i. Recommending teachings or remedial classes for subjects where the student shows weaknesses.
- ii. Advising on workload adjustments such as reducing credit hours during challenging semesters.
- iii. Encouraging participation in academic workshops or skill development programs offered at the University.
- iv. Facilitating peer mentoring or study groups.
- v. Coordinating with teachers for students facing difficulties.

Such interventions shall be documented and revisited during subsequent meetings to assess effectiveness.

6.4. Escalation of Academic Issues

When a student exhibits academic difficulties, such as being placed on probation or consistently poor performance, the Academic Advisor shall promptly report the case to the Head of Department (HoD). The escalation process includes:

- i. Documenting the student's academic issues with specific evidence (grades, attendance).
- ii. Informing the student of the referral to the HoD and explaining possible consequences and support options.

- iii. Collaborating with the HoD and relevant faculty to develop a support plan, which may include academic probation, additional tutoring, or other interventions.
- iv. Following up regularly to monitor the student's improvement and compliance with the support plan.

6.5. Record Keeping

All academic advising records shall be maintained securely by the respective department in electronic or physical formats. The records include:

- i. Minutes or summaries of advising meetings.
- ii. Intervention plans and follow-up notes.
- iii. Correspondence related to escalation and academic support.

Records shall be retained till the student graduation or withdrawal from the University, in compliance with university data retention policies. The Registrar Office shall serve as the custodian of these records, ensuring confidentiality and controlled access. Only authorized personnel, such as academic advisors, departmental heads, and quality assurance staff, shall have access under approved conditions.

6.6. Feedback Mechanisms and Student Surveys

Student feedback shall play a critical role in the continuous enhancement of academic quality and institutional decision-making. The University of South Asia shall establish multiple structured channels to ensure that student voices shall be actively collected, analyzed, and integrated into the quality assurance framework. These channels shall include:

- i. Course and Faculty Evaluation Surveys that shall be conducted each semester to assess teaching effectiveness, course content, and learning resources.
- ii. Graduate and Alumni Surveys that shall be administered periodically to evaluate program outcomes, graduate preparedness, and satisfaction with the educational experience.
- iii. Employer Surveys that shall assess graduates' readiness for employment and the alignment of their skills with market demands.
- iv. Focus Groups and Student Representation where students shall participate in focus groups and serve on University and departmental academic and quality assurance committees to ensure direct input into program evaluation and institutional governance.
- v. Complaint and Grievance Redressal Procedures that shall be maintained to address student complaints promptly, transparently, and fairly.
- ii. The Institutional Quality Assurance and Enhancement (IQAE) office shall be responsible for the systematic collection, analysis, and reporting of feedback data. The IQAE Cell shall ensure that feedback findings are timely shared with the respective departments for corrective actions.

6.7. Extracurricular and Co-curricular Activities

The University shall foster a holistic student experience by encouraging and facilitating participation in extracurricular and co-curricular activities. Such

activities shall contribute to personal development, civic responsibility, and the cultivation of essential soft skills. These activities shall include:

- i. Student Clubs, Societies, and Campus Events that shall focus on arts, sports, technology, leadership, and cultural enrichment, providing platforms for student engagement and skill development.
- ii. Volunteerism and Community Outreach Programs that shall promote social responsibility and community engagement through organized service initiatives.
- iii. Inter-University Competitions and Cultural Exchanges that students shall participate in to showcase talents, collaborate, and gain broader exposure.
- iv. Entrepreneurship and Innovation Challenges that shall stimulate creativity, problem-solving, and entrepreneurial thinking among students.

Participation in these activities shall be recognized as complementary to academic achievement and shall support the development of teamwork, leadership, communication, and ethical responsibility necessary for professional and personal success.

7. Programme Review for Effectiveness and Enhancement (PREE) Policy

7.1. Overview of Self Programme Review for Effectiveness and Enhancement (PREE for IQA)

The University conducts an ongoing Self Programme Review for Effectiveness and Enhancement (PREE for IQA) as a fundamental component of its internal quality assurance framework. This process requires each academic programme to undertake a comprehensive self-assessment annually, evaluating its performance against established PREE Standards covering curriculum design, teaching quality, student support, facilities, and graduate outcomes. Overseen by the Institutional Quality Assessment and Effectiveness (IQAE) Office, the review promotes a culture of continuous improvement by encouraging programmes to identify strengths, address challenges through evidence-based action plans, and align their offerings with institutional goals and national quality benchmarks. The IQAE coordinates and monitors the process to ensure consistency, transparency, and effective follow-up, contributing to the university's overall mission of delivering high-quality education and enhancing student learning experiences.

7.2. Steps Involved in PREE for Internal Quality Assurance (IQA)

The programme internal quality assurance cycle follows a systematic series of steps to ensure thorough evaluation and improvement of academic programmes:

7.2.1. Step 1: Initiation of Self-Assessment

The IQAE Office shall formally initiate the self-assessment process at least one semester before the conclusion of the assessment cycle. This initiation is communicated through the Vice Chancellor's Office to the relevant departments. For programmes undergoing self-assessment for the first time, an extended preparation period of one academic year shall be granted.

7.2.2. Step 2: Formation of Programme Team (PT)

Upon receiving the initiation letter, each department shall form a Programme Team responsible for the self-assessment of each programme. The team shall consist of two to three faculty members possessing expertise in the programme's specializations. The Dean of the respective faculty shall notify the PT.

7.2.3. Step 3: Preparation of Self-Assessment Report (SAR)

The Programme Team shall prepare a detailed Self-Assessment Report over the course of one semester. The SAR shall provide a critical evaluation of the programme's alignment with PREE Standards and include analysis supported by relevant data and evidence. The team acts as the primary point of contact during the review.

7.2.4. Step 4: Submission and Review of SAR

The department shall submit the completed SAR to the IQAE Office via the concerned Dean. The IQAE Office shall review the report within one month to verify that all applicable standards and precepts have been addressed and that the report adheres to the prescribed format.

7.2.5. Step 5: Formation of Assessment Team (AT)

Within one month of SAR submission, the Vice Chancellor shall establish an Assessment Team in consultation with the IQAE Office. The AT shall comprise two to three faculty members from inside or outside the university, including at least one external expert with specialization relevant to the programme.

7.2.6. Step 6: Conduct of Assessment

The Assessment Team shall conduct a thorough assessment of the self-assessment report and associated evidence. This includes considering feedback from students and other stakeholders. The AT shall identify areas of good practice and challenges to be addressed.

7.2.7. Step 7: Reporting Findings

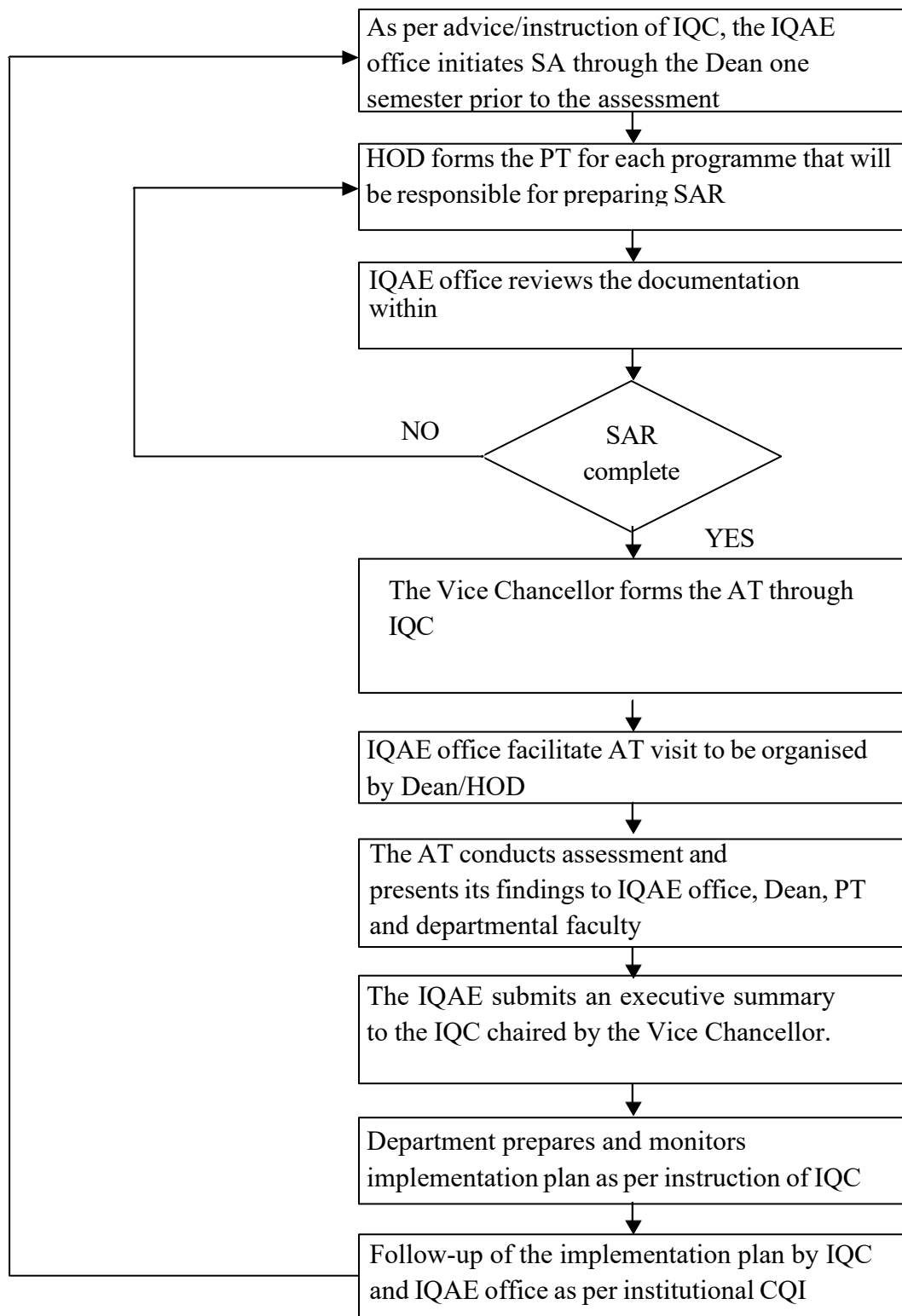
The AT shall submit an assessment report summarizing its findings and recommendations. An exit meeting shall be held, attended by the IQAE Office, Dean, Programme Team, and departmental faculty to discuss the outcomes.

7.2.8. Step 8: Executive Summary and Action Plan

The IQAE Office shall prepare and submit an executive summary of the AT findings to the Vice Chancellor, Rector, or Head of Institute. Following this, the department shall draft an implementation plan outlining corrective actions, responsible parties, and timelines based on the AT's recommendations. A standard format for the action plan shall be used (refer to Annex 1).

7.2.9. Step 9: Monitoring and Follow-up

The IQAE Office shall oversee the monitoring of the implementation plan, ensuring compliance and progress. Academic departments shall regularly inform the IQAE Office of completed corrective actions. IQAE shall review progress once every semester using a standardized review template.



7.3. Programme Self-Assessment Criteria and Sources of Information

Programme-level quality assurance at the University of South Asia is grounded in the PREE Standards established within the national Quality Assurance Framework. All academic programmes shall align their self-assessment processes with these standards to ensure comprehensive evaluation and enhancement of programme quality. The eight PREE Standards that guide this process include:

- i. Programme Mission, Objectives, and Outcomes
- ii. Curriculum Design and Organisation
- iii. Subject-Specific Facilities
- iv. Student Advising and Counselling
- v. Teaching Faculty and Staff
- vi. Institutional Policies and Process Control
- vii. Institutional Support and Facilities
- viii. Institutional General Requirements

Detailed explanations of these standards, including expectations for compliance and contextual rationales, are provided in the Annex of this policy document.

7.4. Structure of the Programme Self-Assessment Document

The University of South Asia shall require each academic programme to prepare a comprehensive Programme Self-Assessment (SA) Document as part of the PREE process. The document shall provide a clear and contextual overview of the programme's operation, quality management, and performance against the PREE Standards to facilitate informed review and enhancement. The SA Document shall be structured as follows:

7.4.1. Section 1: Brief Description and Context

This section shall set the context in which the programme operates, providing a concise description of the programme and institution, including:

- i. The institution's mission, vision, and educational ethos that underpin the programme's aims.
- ii. Major changes affecting the programme since the last self-assessment, such as curriculum revisions, staffing, infrastructure developments, or strategic shifts.
- iii. The implications of these changes, including challenges faced and strategic priorities, particularly concerning safeguarding academic standards and enhancing the student learning experience.
- iv. Details of partnerships or relationships with affiliated colleges or external bodies, where applicable.
- v. External reference points guiding the programme beyond the national Qualifications Framework, such as accreditation bodies, professional councils, or international benchmarks.

7.4.2. Section 2: Track Record in Managing Quality and Standards

This section shall outline the programme team's and institution's historical performance in quality assurance, including:

- i. Background and experience of faculty and management in quality management activities.
- ii. Summary of outcomes from previous internal and external reviews, including accreditation results and institutional responses.
- iii. Explanation of how previous recommendations and action plans have been addressed or justified if unaddressed.

- iv. Identification and dissemination of good practices developed from prior reviews and quality enhancement initiatives.

7.4.3. Section 3: Evaluation Against PREE Standards

The core section of the document shall provide a detailed commentary on how the programme meets each of the eight PREE Standards outlined in the University's Quality Assurance Framework (see Annex for detailed criteria). For each standard, the programme shall address:

- i. What actions and processes are in place to meet the standard.
- ii. How these processes are implemented and managed.
- iii. The rationale behind the chosen approaches.
- iv. Performance evaluation metrics and evidence demonstrating effectiveness.
- v. Methods of continuous evaluation and enhancement activities.
- vi. Planned measures for further enhancement based on self-assessment findings.

The SA Document shall explicitly reference evidence supporting the evaluation, such as policies, procedures, committee structures, meeting minutes, accreditation reports, benchmarking data, and responses to external reviews. This evidence shall be representative and verifiable, enabling transparency and confidence in the programme's quality assurance. To facilitate a robust and credible self-assessment, programmes shall include the following supporting documentation with their SA:

- a. Relevant institutional and programme-level quality assurance policies, procedures, and guidance documents.
- b. Organisational charts or diagrams illustrating the governance structure responsible for quality assurance at both central and departmental levels.
- c. Minutes and records of meetings from central quality assurance committees covering the two academic years preceding the review.
- d. Summaries and reports of recent accreditation or periodic review outcomes, including institutional responses, for the last two years.

8. External Programme Review for Effectiveness and Enhancement (PREE for EQA)

8.1. Overview of PREE for EQA

The University follows the External Programme Review for Effectiveness and Enhancement (PREE for EQA) as a key quality assurance process, primarily focused on reviewing graduate-level programmes (Levels 7 and 8) in line with national standards. This review, conducted every five years, is overseen by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) HEC Pakistan and aims to ensure that the

academic standards of programmes meet required levels and that the quality of the student learning experience is both safeguarded and continuously improved.

PREE for EQA serves two main purposes:

- i. To provide accountability and assurance to students, employers, and the public that programmes deliver quality education at the expected standards.
- ii. To encourage and support ongoing improvement and enhancement of academic programmes.

This review process evaluates several aspects, including the programme's subject standing and development, management of quality and standards, academic policies, student learning experiences, and alignment with University mission and external benchmarks such as accreditation council criteria and employer expectations.

8.2. Scope and Coverage

PREE for EQA applies to all graduate programmes leading to Level 7 and Level 8 awards under the National Qualifications Framework of Pakistan. The review particularly focuses on:

- i. The academic and strategic positioning of the subject within the university and sector trends.
- ii. Quality management and assurance practices including documentation, monitoring, and assessment processes.
- iii. Maintenance and support of academic standards.
- iv. Student experience, with a focus on student-led enhancement efforts.
- v. Engagement with external stakeholders for benchmarking and relevance to professional and industry standards.
- vi. Currency and validity of courses considering developments in research, pedagogy, and industry.
- vii. Assessment effectiveness in confirming attainment of intended learning outcomes.
- viii. Equality of opportunity for diverse student groups across modes of study and entry routes.

8.3. Review Criteria

The external review is based on the PREE Standards similar to the ones that have been defined for PREE for IQA:

- i. Programme mission, objectives, and outcomes
- ii. Curriculum design and organisation
- iii. Subject-specific facilities
- iv. Student advising and counselling
- v. Teaching faculty and staff qualifications
- vi. Institutional policies and process control
- vii. Institutional support and facilities
- viii. Institutional general requirements

Additionally, the review considers specific criteria set by the relevant Accreditation Council to ensure vocational relevance and programme quality. These criteria are shared with the programmes at least six months before the review.

8.4. Review Outcomes

The external review panel will assess whether the programme meets the PREE Standards and Accreditation Council criteria. Based on their evaluation, the outcomes may be:

- i. Approved
- ii. Approved with Recommendations
- iii. Approved with Conditions
- iv. Not Approved

The review report will highlight good practices and recommend improvements. Good practice refers to processes or methods that positively contribute to quality education. Recommendations will indicate the priority for action, guiding the university's programme team in developing an effective post-review action plan. Judgements are made by a panel of experts based on evidence collected during the review, and these decisions reflect the panel's reasonable conclusions. The review report will also include an executive summary designed for a general audience.

8.5. Post-Review Actions

Following the review, the university's programme team shall respond to the findings by preparing an action plan to address recommendations and build on good practices. The Institutional Quality Assessment and Effectiveness (IQAE) Office shall oversee the implementation and monitoring of this plan.

If any conditions are set by the review panel, the University shall resolve these conditions before continuing to offer the programme to students.

9. Key Roles and Responsibilities of the Review Panel Facilitator

9.1. Facilitator from University:

The University of South Asia shall appoint a Facilitator from the programme team to support the smooth and effective conduct of the Programme Review for Effectiveness and Enhancement (PREE). The Facilitator shall act as the main liaison between the review panel and the university, ensuring clear communication and efficient organisation throughout the review process. Key responsibilities of the Facilitator include:

- i. Coordinating with the QAA Officer to organise and manage all aspects of the PREE, including preparation and the on-site visit.
- ii. Providing the review panel with guidance on the university's and programme's structures, policies, priorities, and submitted documentation.
- iii. Maintaining an updated list of evidence and information to be presented to the review panel, confirmed with the QAA Officer.
- iv. Facilitating communication between the panel and the institution to ensure mutual understanding of issues raised during the review.
- v. Supporting the Lead Student Representative (LSR) by keeping the student body informed about the review process and helping prepare student submissions.

- vi. Meeting the review panel as requested during the on-site visit to clarify questions and provide additional information.
- vii. Observing review panel meetings, except private student meetings, without actively participating unless invited.

The Facilitator shall work closely with the LSR to promote student engagement in the review and assist in ensuring that the student submission is well-prepared and evidence-based. This role is vital for fostering cooperation and transparency between the university and the review panel, thereby enhancing the quality and effectiveness of the programme review.

9.2. Student Engagement in PREE for EQA

Students play an important role in assessing the quality of higher education because they have firsthand experience of their programmes. Students can contribute to the review process in several ways:

- i. By choosing a Lead Student Representative (LSR) who stays involved throughout the review.
- ii. By sharing their views in a student submission that describes their academic experience and quality assurance.
- iii. By participating in meetings during the on-site visit to inform the review panel about the programme.
- iv. By working with the university to create and carry out an action plan after the review.

Students are key beneficiaries of the review and are central to its success. They often help prepare for the review and provide important input. The review panel meets with a group of students and works closely with the LSR. Students also help respond to the review findings as the university improves the programme.

Student reviewers are also part of the Quality Assurance Agency's (QAA) review panels, contributing equally alongside other panel members. QAA supports and trains the LSR. The university must help the Student Council and representatives take part in the review by offering training, advice, and access to information

9.3. Lead Student Representative (LSR)

The Lead Student Representative (LSR) plays a pivotal role in the University of South Asia's Programme Review for Effectiveness and Enhancement (PREE), ensuring that students actively participate and contribute throughout the review process. The LSR acts as the liaison between the Student Council for Academic Learning & Enhancement (SCALE), the official student body established to provide feedback on quality assurance mechanisms, the institution/programme team, and the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA). The LSR normally oversees the preparation of the student submission, which presents the students' perspective on academic and quality assurance matters.

The LSR also collaborates with the University to select students who will meet the review panel, based on QAA's recommendations.

9.3.1. Constitution and Selection of SCALE Members

The University shall constitute the Student Council for Academic Learning & Enhancement (SCALE) as a representative student body tasked with gathering student feedback on academic quality and institutional policies.

SCALE members shall be selected based on a transparent and fair selection procedure by the IQC subject to fulfilment of the following eligibility criteria , ensuring diverse representation from all taught programs at all academic levels.

9.3.2. Eligibility Criteria of SCALE members:

- i. Active enrollment as a student in a degree programme at the University.
- ii. Demonstrated interest in academic quality, student welfare, and institutional development.
- iii. Good academic standing, with a minimum cumulative grade point average (CGPA) of 3.0.
- iv. Strong communication and leadership skills.
- v. Commitment to attending meetings and participating in quality assurance activities.

SCALE members shall serve fixed term of two year and further extendable for another year subject to his remaining degree duration and approval of Director IQAE, and shall receive orientation and training on quality assurance processes and responsibilities from the IQAE Office.

The SCALE members will serve on the pleasure of IQC, which may end their term on the basis of poor performance, lack of commitment or misconduct.

9.3.3. Eligibility and Selection of the Lead Student Representative (LSR)

The selection of the LSR shall follow a fair and transparent process coordinated by IQAE office. The LSR shall be appointed by the SCALE members themselves, through election or consensus, with guidance and support from IQAE office. Eligibility criteria for the LSR shall include:

- i. Current membership in SCALE.
- ii. Enrollment as a full-time student in a relevant academic programme.
- iii. Must have minimum 3.5 CGPA at the time of selection
- iv. Must have passed half of their degree duration without any semester break and failing any courses
- v. Must not have been convicted in any academic or general misconduct
- vi. Demonstrated leadership, organizational skills, and ability to represent student interests effectively.
- vii. Must not hold any senior administrative, academic, or quality-related staff position within the University.
- vi. Willingness to commit time and effort to facilitate participating in quality assurance activities including communication and coordination responsibilities.

The LSR will be elected for 2-years term with eligibility of re-appointment for another term subject to the fulfilment of above-mentioned criteria and election process. The IQC any time may end the term of LSR on the basis of poor performance, lack of commitment or misconduct.

9.3.4. Responsibilities of the Lead Student Representative

The LSR shall:

- i. Liaise continuously with the Programme Facilitator and the QAA Officer to ensure effective communication between SCALE, the institution, and the review panel.

- ii. Lead and oversee the preparation of the student submission, ensuring it is evidence-based and reflective of the wider student body's views.
- iii. Coordinate the selection of students who will participate in meetings with the review panel.
- iv. Facilitate the flow of information about the PREE process and progress to the student body.
- v. Provide feedback from students on draft review reports and contribute to institutional action plans in response to review findings.
- vi. Attend key review events including the on-site visit and final meetings as invited by the review panel.
- vii. Observe panel meetings with students, respecting the voluntary nature of attendance and refraining from participation unless invited.

The University shall provide reasonable operational and logistical support to the LSR, including access to relevant institutional information and training to fulfil their role effectively.

9.4. Reviewers and Review Panels

- i. Each review panel shall consist of two expert reviewers, typically academic staff from other higher education institutions in Pakistan. At least one reviewer shall have specific expertise in the programme's curriculum area, international experience, or be a vocational expert or employer. For larger programmes, a student reviewer shall also be included.
- ii. Reviewers shall be selected based on their experience and knowledge of higher education quality management, preferably from institutions similar to the one under review. Student reviewers shall be current or recent student representatives with experience in academic quality matters and can serve for up to two years after graduation. First-year students are not eligible.

9.5. Role of the QAA Officer

The QAA Officer shall guide the review panel and the institution/programme team throughout all stages of the Programme Review for Effectiveness and Enhancement (PREE for EQA), ensuring that all approved procedures are properly followed. The key responsibilities of the QAA Officer shall include:

- i. Ensuring compliance with the PREE process as outlined in the official handbook.
- ii. Coordinating with the Facilitator to schedule review activities.
- iii. Confirming arrangements for the initial review panel meeting and on-site visits.
- iv. Maintaining accurate records of all meetings related to the review.
- v. Editing and overseeing the production of the final review report

10. Preparation for On-Site Visit in PREE for EQA

The University of South Asia shall follow a structured timeline to prepare for the on-site visit during the Programme Review for Effectiveness and Enhancement (PREE). Key activities shall include:

- i. 15 weeks before visit: QAA shall contact the University to schedule the review, request nomination of the Facilitator and Lead Student Representative (LSR), and confirm practical arrangements.
- ii. 10 weeks before visit: QAA shall hold a briefing for the institution and programme team to explain the review process, submission requirements, and student involvement. The review panel's composition and on-site visit dates shall be confirmed.
- iii. 7 weeks before visit: The University shall submit the programme and student submissions along with supporting evidence demonstrating the programme's quality and standards.
- iv. 4 weeks before visit: Reviewers shall conduct a desk-based analysis of the submissions to identify key areas needing clarification during the visit and prepare pre-visit questions.
- v. 3 weeks before visit: The review panel shall hold a virtual meeting to discuss findings and finalise visit logistics. QAA shall confirm the visit programme and pre-visit questions with the University.

Throughout this period, the University shall disseminate information to students about the review and prepare for their engagement.

QAA shall provide dedicated briefings, mostly virtual, but face-to-face sessions shall be arranged if needed, especially for institutions new to QAA reviews or undergoing complex changes.

QAA shall confirm the review panel membership and visit duration, managing conflicts of interest and ensuring transparency. Information about reviewers shall be shared only upon formal request.

11. Activities Before the On-Site Visit

11.1. First Contact with QAA

When a programme's PREE for EQA is due, QAA shall contact the University to schedule the review, request nomination of a Facilitator and Lead Student Representative (LSR), and confirm practical arrangements and deadlines. The University shall inform students about the review and their role in it. QAA shall assign a QAA Officer and administrative support for the process.

11.2. QAA Briefings

Before the visit, QAA shall provide briefings to the University and programme teams explaining the review process, submission requirements, and student involvement. Briefings are usually virtual but may be face-to-face in special cases such as new or complex programmes. QAA shall also liaise with the LSR to prepare the student submission and coordinate student participation.

11.3. On-Site Visit Duration and Review Panel Composition

QAA shall confirm the length of the on-site visit and the review panel members. Panel member details are shared only on formal request. Conflicts of interest are managed carefully by QAA and the University.

11.4. Programme Submission

The University shall prepare a programme submission including a self-assessment document and supporting evidence. This document shall describe the programme, quality assurance approaches, and evidence of effectiveness. The submission is due seven weeks before the visit and may be followed by requests for additional information.

11.5. Student Submission

The student submission provides the student perspective on academic experience and quality assurance. QAA offers guidance to students to ensure the submission is well-prepared and evidence-based.

11.6. Review Panel Desk-Based Analysis

Upon receiving submissions, the review panel shall analyse documents to identify areas needing clarification, prepare questions, and plan meetings for the visit. They evaluate data on student outcomes and institutional practices. Any gaps or additional information requests are communicated via the QAA Officer.

11.7. Use of Data in PREE

QAA shall provide key performance metrics to the University and review panel. The University should also provide its own data on recruitment, retention, progression, and achievement over recent years, and benchmark against national or international standards where possible.

11.8. First Review Panel Meeting

At least two weeks before the visit, the review panel shall meet without the institution to finalize the agenda, confirm issues to explore, and decide visit duration based on the desk analysis. Longer visits may be required for programmes with complex arrangements or concerns about standards.

11.9. Requests for Additional Information

The review panel may request limited additional information to complete their assessment. These requests are specific and proportionate, and the University can seek clarification to provide the most relevant evidence.

12. On-Site Visit and Review Panel Judgements in PREE

- i. On-site visits shall typically last one day but may extend to two days for larger or complex programmes, as decided by QAA.
- ii. The review panel shall meet senior staff (Dean or Head of Department) to discuss institutional strategy and how the programme fits within it.
- iii. Meetings shall also be held with academic and support staff, employers, students, and alumni.
- iv. The panel shall observe facilities, learning resources, and the virtual learning environment.
- v. Student meetings shall provide direct insight into their academic experience and involvement in quality assurance.
- vi. A closing meeting with senior staff, the Facilitator, and Lead Student Representative (LSR) shall summarise key issues and allow clarification; it is not a feedback session.

- vii. The Facilitator shall organise all meetings, ensure timely attendance, and coordinate use of video or teleconferencing as needed.
- viii. The panel shall strictly follow the schedule, including private meetings to discuss findings.
- ix. The QAA Officer shall attend all meetings, take notes, chair private discussions, and ensure evidence-based, consistent judgements.
- x. Where applicable, the panel shall meet staff and students from partner institutions, either in person or virtually.
- xi. After the visit, the panel shall meet privately with the QAA Officer to finalise provisional judgements, highlight good practices, and agree on recommendations.
- xii. Provisional judgements shall not be immediately shared with the institution.

13. Post On-Site Visit Activities and Reporting

After the on-site visit, a structured timeline shall guide the subsequent steps:

- i. Within three weeks, the review findings shall be moderated for consistency.
- ii. By week four, a draft report shall be sent to the institution and Lead Student Representative (LSR) for factual accuracy checks, with relevant awarding bodies copied in.
- iii. By week six, the institution and LSR shall submit their comments on the draft report.
- iv. By week eight, the QAA Officer shall finalize the report, incorporating corrections.
- v. By week ten, the final PREE report shall be published on QAA's website.

The review report shall provide clear judgements, identify good practices and areas for improvement, and include a root cause analysis and recommendations. It will follow a concise format aligned with the programme self-assessment and student submission structures. QAA maintains editorial control to ensure clarity and consistency across reports.

The University shall respond to the report by preparing an action plan addressing recommendations and leveraging good practices. The action plan shall be signed off by the Dean or Department Head and developed in collaboration with student representatives. Annual updates on the action plan shall be provided until all actions are completed.

If any conditions are imposed by the review, the programme must address them before continuing delivery. The IQAE unit shall support and monitor action plan implementation to ensure positive impact.

14. Review of Institutional Performance and Enhancement (RIPE) – Internal Quality Assurance (IQA)

14.1. RIPE Overview

The University is committed to fostering a comprehensive Quality Culture across all academic and administrative levels. This commitment is operationalized through the Review of Institutional Performance and Enhancement (RIPE) as an integral part of the University's Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) framework.

The institutional IQA is overseen by IQAE office and the Institutional Quality Circle (IQC). These bodies collectively ensure the systematic maintenance and enhancement of quality standards across all university functions, including its affiliated colleges.

RIPE at the University is centered on the Institutional Self-Assessment (ISA) process, which annually evaluates institutional performance against the established RIPE Standards outlined in the HEC Quality Assurance Framework. This self-assessment incorporates programme-level and departmental reviews, with active participation from affiliated colleges in line with their delegated responsibilities.

14.2. Institutional Self-Assessment Process

The University follows a structured ISA process consisting of pre-visit, on-visit, and post-visit activities to ensure thorough internal review and continuous improvement:

14.2.1. Pre-Visit Activities

- i. The Institutional Quality Circle (IQC) initiates the ISA process and appoints committees for preparing the Institutional Performance Report (IPR) and monitoring follow-up actions.
- ii. The IPR Committee compiles the annual Institutional Performance Report as directed by the IQC. Simultaneously, the Follow-Up Committee prepares a status report on previous recommendations.
- iii. The IQAE rigorously reviews these reports to ensure all RIPE Standards and questions are comprehensively addressed with adequate documentary evidence. Reports missing essential information are returned for revision.
- iv. IQC forms the RIPE Committee comprising 5–7 members, including at least one external expert from HEC's pool and senior internal academic and administrative leaders.
- v. The IQAE organizes an orientation for RIPE Committee members to familiarize them with RIPE Standards, HEC expectations, and review protocols.
- vi. Finalized reports are shared with the RIPE Committee, and the IQAE schedules the review with necessary consents.

14.2.2. Institutional Performance Report (IPR) Preparation Committee

(1) Purpose:

The IPR Preparation Committee shall compile the Institutional Performance Report (IPR), reflecting the University's performance

against all RIPE Standards. The committee shall be comprised of the following categories of members to be nominated by the Vice Chancellor other than ex-officio member. The Vice Chancellor may change the members for every IPR cycle.

(2) Composition:

The Committee shall be constituted as follows:

- i. Chairperson: A senior academic leader
- ii. Faculty Representatives: One senior academic (preferably Dean or HoD) from each of the active faculties
- iii. Administrative Representatives: Two to three senior administrators (e.g., Registrar, Treasurer, Controller of Examinations, Director of ORIC, Director of Student Services)
- iv. IQAE Representative: Director or his nominee shall serve as the Member Secretary
- v. Student Representative: One senior student nominated by LSR from SCALE

(3) Functions:

The Committee:

- i. Shall compile the University-wide Institutional Performance Report (IPR)
- ii. Shall ensure all Standards and their EOIs are addressed with proper documentation
- iii. Shall gather, validate, and analyse evidence collected from departments, administrative units, and stakeholders
- iv. Shall facilitate input from faculty, students, and staff to produce a comprehensive and reflective self-assessment
- v. Shall draft, refine, and submit the IPR to the IQAE for review and feedback

14.2.3. Follow-up Committee

(1) Purpose:

The Follow-up Committee shall track the implementation of quality improvement actions arising from previous IPRs and external RIPE recommendations. It shall ensure that the University continuously works to address identified issues. The committee shall be comprised of the following categories of members to be nominated by the Vice Chancellor other than ex-officio member. The Vice Chancellor may change the members for every cycle.

(2) Composition:

The Committee shall be constituted as follows:

- i. Chairperson: A senior academic or administrative leader
- ii. Academic Representatives: Three to four experienced academic staff members, preferably including some from the IPR Committee

- iii. Administrative Representatives: Two to three administrative heads or their representatives responsible for implementing RIPE recommendations
- iv. IQAE Representative: Director or his nominee shall serve as the Member Secretary
- v. Student Representative, where required based on the nature of recommendations being reviewed

(3) Functions:

The Committee:

- i. Shall maintain a register of recommendations and associated action plans from previous reviews
- ii. Shall collect updates from responsible units on progress and implementation status
- iii. Shall monitor adherence to assigned timelines and document constraints affecting delivery
- iv. Shall compile the Follow-up Report with evidence of actions taken and impact achieved
- v. Shall submit the Follow-up Report to the IQAE and IQC for review and record
- vi. Shall provide recommendations for long-term strategic or policy improvements based on trend analysis

14.2.4. On-Visit Activities

- i. The RIPE Committee validates the documentary evidence against claims in the IPR and prepares probing questions for various stakeholders.
- ii. Separate meetings are conducted with diverse groups, including undergraduate and postgraduate students, faculty members, academic heads, administrative staff, campus directors, and affiliated college leaders to gather comprehensive feedback.
- iii. Physical inspection of facilities such as classrooms, libraries, laboratories, student accommodations, sports and recreational facilities, auditoriums, and transport services is undertaken to assess the learning environment.
- iv. The RIPE Committee convenes privately to finalize observations before concluding the visit.

14.2.5. Post-Visit Activities

- i. The RIPE Committee prepares a detailed report including findings, suggestions, and recommendations following QAA guidelines.
- ii. The report is submitted to IQAE, which ensures all committee members sign off. IQAE mediates any conflicts to achieve consensus.
- iii. The finalized report is presented to the IQC for review, approval, and governance oversight.
- iv. IQAE disseminates the report to relevant departments and oversees implementation of recommendations through the IQC in alignment with the University's Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) policy.

14.2.6. Roles and Responsibilities

- i. Institutional Quality Assessment and Effectiveness (IQAE): Leads planning, coordination, review, and follow-up of the ISA process and external review preparations.
- ii. Institutional Quality Circle (IQC): Provides strategic governance, approves assessment reports, and monitors compliance and quality improvement initiatives.
- iii. RIPE Committee: Conducts objective review and validation of institutional performance data and stakeholder feedback during ISA.
- iv. Facilitators and Committees: Support report preparation, evidence collection, and implementation tracking.
- v. Affiliated Colleges: Participate in self-assessment processes per delegated responsibilities and contribute to the overall institutional performance evaluation.

15. Institutional self-assessment criteria

The Quality Assurance Framework is divided into four parts, with Part 4 focused on internal quality assurance, which includes programme-level and institutional-level quality assurance. Institutional quality assurance aligns with the RIPE Standards, against which all higher education institutions are required to measure their quality practices.

The RIPE Standards are categorized as follows:

15.1. Strategic Development

- Standard 1: Vision, mission, goals and strategic planning
- Standard 2: Governance, leadership and organisation
- Standard 3: Institutional resources and planning
- Standard 4: Audit and finance
- Standard 5: Affiliated colleges/institutions
- Standard 6: Internationalisation of higher education and global engagement

15.2. Academic Development

- Standard 7: Faculty recruitment, development and support services
- Standard 8: Academic programmes and curricula
- Standard 9: Admission, progression, assessment and certification
- Standard 10: Student support services
- Standard 11: Impactful teaching and learning and community engagement
- Standard 12: Research, innovation, entrepreneurship and industrial linkage

15.3. Institutional Development

- Standard 13: Fairness and integrity
- Standard 14: Public information and transparency
- Standard 15: Institutional effectiveness, quality assurance and enhancement
- Standard 16: CQI and cyclical external quality assurance

The University's IQAE compiles inputs from programme and departmental self-assessments, support and administrative units, as well as feedback from students and

stakeholders to prepare a comprehensive institutional self-assessment report. This process involves all stakeholders, from the Vice Chancellor and senior management through faculty and administration staff to external partners and students, ensuring a thorough and reflective evaluation.

16. Structure of the Institutional Self- Assessment Document

The institutional self-assessment document should begin by outlining the context of the institution, describing the provision under review, and noting any significant recent changes and their impact on academic standards and student experience. It should also include details of relationships with affiliated colleges where relevant.

16.1. Section 1: Brief Description

Covers the institution's mission and ethos, recent major changes since the last QAA review, challenges and strategic priorities related to quality assurance, external reference points beyond the Qualifications Framework, and affiliated colleges' responsibilities.

16.2. Section 2: Track Record in Managing Quality and Standards

Summarizes the institution's and programme team's experience in quality management, outcomes from previous reviews, responses to recommendations, and actions taken to build on good practices.

16.3. Section 3: Standards

Addresses each RIPE Standard individually by explaining:

- What is done
- How it is done
- Why it is done that way
- How well it is done
- How performance is measured and evidenced

The document must include supporting evidence such as policies, committee structures and minutes, accreditation reports, and relevant benchmarking data to substantiate claims of meeting standards.

17. External Review of Institutional Performance and Enhancement (RIPE for EQA)

The RIPE for EQA follows the same report format and standards of RIPE for IQA.

17.1. Review Outcomes

After the Review of Institutional Performance and Enhancement (RIPE), the university will receive a judgement based on how well it manages and improves its quality. These judgements fall into four categories:

- i. The university has successfully implemented effective quality strategies.
- ii. Some effective strategies are in place, but more work is needed.
- iii. Many strategies are not yet fully in place, though the university is making progress.

iv. Effective strategies have not been developed.

The review panel will also highlight good practices—ways the university is doing particularly well—and suggest improvements where needed. Recommendations will show how urgent the changes should be, which the university will consider when planning its actions through the Institutional Quality Circle (IQC).

Judgements are made by experienced peers using the RIPE Standards and the evidence provided. The better the university meets the standards, the better the judgement it receives.

If there is any disagreement about the judgement, the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) can refer the case to the Board for Assessment of Quality Assurance (BAQA). BAQA will then assign the university one of these classifications:

- a. Effective
- b. Progressive
- c. Average
- d. Unclassified

Based on the classification, the university will be reviewed again within one to five years. Moreover, the pre visit, on-site and post visit schedule and activities of stakeholders are the same as PREE.
