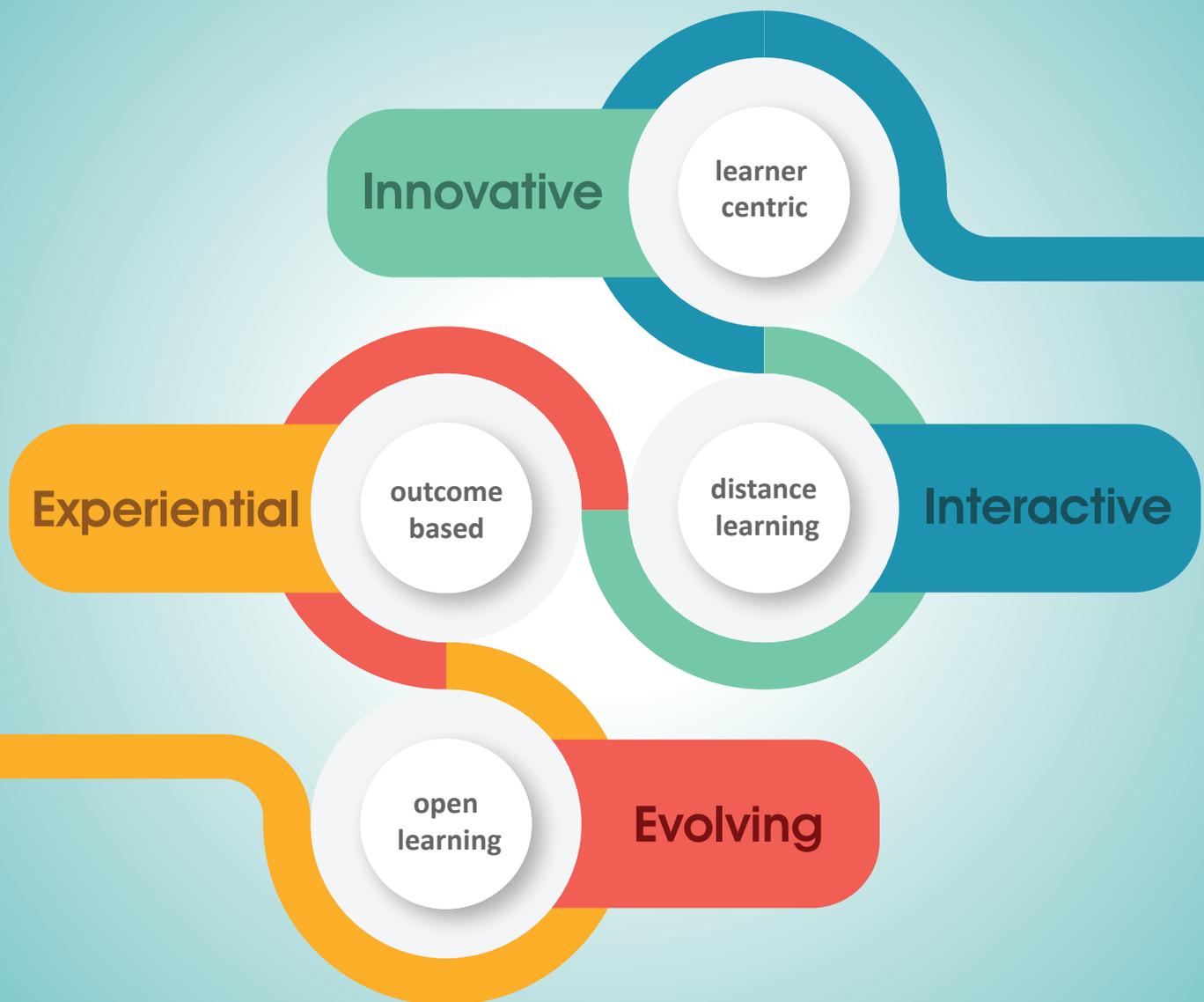# Manual for Review of Undergraduate Study Programmes of Sri Lankan Distance Higher Education Institutions

Innovative

learner centric

Experiential

outcome based

distance learning

Interactive

open learning

Evolving

University Grants Commission Sri Lanka
October 2019

Manual for Programme Review of Sri Lankan Distance Higher Education Institutions

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October 2019

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Foreword

With the increasing acceptance of Open and Distance Learning (ODL) as widening access to higher education, research suggests that it has become increasingly crucial that quality assurance process is developed and maintained if the ODL provision has to be relevant and effectively functional that the products have the same recognition as the conventional.
A frequently cited challenge by ODL practitioners is that many quality assurance agencies and accreditation bodies use standards and indicators that have been developed for conventional universities to assess and review ODL institutions and programmes.

International best practices recognize that arising from the physical separation of the learner from the teacher, the separation of programme design, delivery, learner support and assessment and the use of media and technologies to bridge the gap between the learner and the teacher, the functions and the processes in ODL are radically different from those found in traditional face-to-face classroom teaching. Accommodating these differences in Quality Assurance (QA) systems had been essential in establishing the credibility of ODL.

Thus in 2007 a milestone achieved by the Distance Education Modernization Project,(DEMP) of the Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE) and the Asian Development Bank was a 'home-grown' quality assurance system of accreditation standards and performance indicators developed for ensuring quality in distance higher education in Sri Lanka This was internationalized by Commonwealth of Learning (COL) to make it into a generic document applicable across Commonwealth countries and published by, COL and, UNESCO as "Quality Assurance Toolkit , Distance Higher Education :Institutions and Programmes" (2007). In 2015 decision was made by the UGC that while the conventional universities would be evaluated using "Manual for Programme Review of Undergraduate Programmes of Sri Lankan Universities and Higher Education Institutions" (UGC- HETC 2015), The Open university of Sri Lanka should be evaluated using the "Quality Assurance Toolkit for Distance Higher Education :Institutions and Programmes" (COL 2009).

 To keep abreast with the assessment standards in the "Manual for Programme Review of Undergraduate Programmes of Sri Lankan Universities and Higher Education Institutions" (2015) the assessment 'Standards' in the "Quality Assurance Toolkit for Distance Higher Education: Institutions and Programmes" have been updated in this manual and this manual will be used henceforth to review Study Programmes of OUSL in Sri Lanka.

This manual will serve as a guide for Universities and other Higher Education Institutions to adopt and internalize good practices and standards in respect of quality assurance of their Study Programmes . It is not an easy task to compile a manual of this nature accommodating views of many stakeholders. We appreciate the contribution of all the resource persons in compiling this manual which will be an effective aid to the process of quality assurance in the Higher Education sector of the country.

Prof. Mohan de Silva
Chairman
University Grants Commission

Acknowledgements

List of Abbreviations / Acronyms

APQN	Asia Pacific Quality Network
AR & FR	Administrative Regulations & Financial Regulations
ARWU	Academic Ranking of World Universities
CDs	Compact Disks
CEOs	Chief executive Officers
CODL	Centre for Open and Distance Learning
CPD	Continuous professional development
CVCD	Committee of Vice Chancellors and Directors
DE	Distance Education
EDP QA	External Degree Programme Quality Assurance
ELTU	English Language Teaching Unit
EQA	External Quality Assurance
HE	Higher Education
HEIs	Higher Education Institutions
HETC	Higher Education for the Twentieth Century
HR	Human Resource
ICT	Information & Communication Technology
ILOs	Intended Learning Outcomes
INQAAHE	International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education
IPR	Intellectual Property Rights
IQA	Internal QualityAssurance
IQAU	Internal Quality Assurance Units
IQAC	Internal Quality Assurance Cells
IR	Institutional Review
IRQUE	Improving Relevance and Quality of Undergraduate Education
IRR	Institutional Review Report
IT	Information Technology
LMS	Learning Management Systems
MBBS	Bachelor of Medicine & Bachelor of Surgery
MIS	Management Information System
MoHE	Ministry of Higher Education
MOUs	Memoranda of Understanding
NAAC	National Assessment and Accreditation Council
NEC	National Education Commission
NQAAB	National Quality Assurance and Accreditation Board
NVQF	National Vocational Training Qualification Framework
OBE	Outcome-Based Education
ODL	Open and Distance Learning

PG	Post Graduate
QA	Quality Assurance
QAA	Quality Assurance Agency
QAC	Quality Assurance Council
SBS	Subject Benchmark Statements
SCL	Student-Centred Learning
SDC	Staff Development Centre
SER	Self Evaluation Report
SJTU	Shanghai's Ja Tong Institution
SLMC	Sri Lanka Medical Council
SLQF	Sri Lanka Qualifications Framework
THES	Times Higher Education Supplement
TOR	Terms of Reference
UGC	University Grants Commission
UMO	University Medical Officer

Contents

Introduction

Purpose of the Manual

The Manual for review of undergraduate study programmes of Distance Higher Education Institutions has been developed to provide guidance to Sri Lankan Distance Higher Education Institutions who wish to submit their Programmes of Study under the Quality Assurance Framework of the University Grants Commission (UGC) and the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE). It is to be read in conjunction with the Manual for Institutional Review of Sri Lankan Distance Higher Education Institutions published by the UGC (2019) and should be considered as an adjunct Manual. 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.

This Manual is an upgrading of the Standards in the Quality Assurance Toolkit for Distance Higher Education: Institutions and Programmers developed by the Distance Education Modernization Project (DEMP) of Sri Lanka under the aegis of the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) in collaboration with Commonwealth of Learning (COL) and UNESCO and published by the Commonwealth of Learning (COL 2009). It will effectively replace the manual which has served this purpose up to now.

Though primarily meant as a guide for Programme Review, it will give a brief overview of all aspects pertaining to quality assurance in Higher Education in Sri Lanka, dedicated to Open and Distance Learning (ODL) mode, such as Open Universities for the benefit of academics and administrators in open universities and other HEIs dedicated to ODL mode.

The conventional universities where the principal mode of delivery is face-to-face, will be evaluated using Manual for Review of Undergraduate Study Programmes of Sri Lankan Universities and Higher Education Institutions (2015), even if they use a multiple mode of delivery. External degree programmes offered by conventional universities using ODL mode will be evaluated using "Quality Assurance Manual for External Degree Programmers and Extension Courses" (UGC-HETC 2014)

Who will find this Manual useful?

The Manual for review of Undergraduate Study Programmes of Sri Lankan Distance Higher Education Institutions has been developed to provide guidance to dedicated ODL institutions of higher learning such as the Open University of Sri Lanka (OUSL) and such other higher education institutions offering degree programmers through ODL mode.

The Manual addresses as its primary audience the academics and administrators and decision makers in the Open University of Sri Lanka and other HEIs dedicated to the ODL mode. It will be essential reading for members of the IQAU, IQAC, Heads of Departments, Deans, Registrar, Vice-Chancellor, of open universities and CEOs of other HEIs. Its content may also prove useful to faculty members of other universities who are called upon from time to time to undertake responsibilities at open universities.

Many academics and administrators in the conventional university system are not familiar with the ODL system and the tools of quality assurance review of open universities. Thus it is necessary to train senior academics and administrators in the university system who are involved with ODL review. Hence this Manual is a comprehensive document prepared to facilitate the training of reviewers .It will be useful for all institutional and programme reviewers and potential reviewers of open universities and HEIs, Quality Assurance Council (QAC) staff and external review agencies. It will be useful as a resource base for intensive training programmes and workshops organized periodically both at institutional and national level for enhancing the efficiency of distance higher education institutions. It will be a useful reference for other stakeholders such as students, parents, funding agencies in tate and private sector, international agencies and policy makers.

The manual will serve as a practical guide for universities and HEIs dedicated to ODL mode to prepare a Self-Evaluation Report (SER).

Thus the utility of the quality" standards" in this Manual is multifold. It can be used for quality management, strategic planning and for continuous improvement of ODL programmes.

How the Manual is organized?

The Manual consists of three parts.

Part I deals with perspectives of Open and Distance Learning System and Institutional Framework for Quality Assurance in Higher Education delivered via Open and Distance Learning mode. It consists of one chapter.

Chapter One deals with the theoretical /conceptual perspectives including definitions of quality, quality assurance, purpose and importance of quality assurance and the respective roles of internal and external quality assurance, the unit of assessment and the difference between institutional and programme review. It also describes the purpose and scope of Institutional Review, the pre-requisites for Institutional review, the review process and review outcome.

Part II deals with important theoretical and practical considerations in objectively assessing quality by peer review .It consists of two chapters.

Chapter Two defines quality 'Criteria' that encompass the key aspects of the programme operations including inputs that facilitate certain processes that contribute to the achievement of outputs/outcomes.Six Criteria have been identified.Under each criterion the recommended /proven procedures and practices that contribute to enhance the quality of the programmes of study are listed /explained as "Best Practices". Faculties are expected to adopt and internalize the best practices into operation of their programmes.

Chapter Three – In order to enable reviewers to evaluate the performance objectively , these best practices are captured into specific and measurable statements termed 'Standards' Each of the standards articulates a dimension of programme quality .The standards are aspirational expectations that must be met at least minimally. Standards given here are Threshold Academic Standards ie. the minimum acceptable level of achievement that a programme has to demonstrate to be eligible for the academic awards of qualifications. These standards were developed through a lengthy participatory process involving the relevant stakeholders in articulating the dimensions of quality required of open universities deserving the public trust.

This chapter lists the specific Standards. The reviewers are expected to objectively assess the performance of the Programme by capturing the degree of internalization of best practices and the level of compliance/attainment of respective standards and assign a score for each standard on a four- point Lickert scale. It also describes the procedure for assessment of standards, computation of final score and assignment of a grade for performance.

Part III deals with the practical aspects of Self-evaluation, the Programme Review and the Programme Review report. It consists of three chapters.

Chapter four describes the self-evaluation process in detail,the format of the Self Evaluation Report (SER) to be prepared for the Programme to be reviewed, and provides detailed guidelines as to how the SER is to be prepared in relation to the expected standards listed in Chapter Three. This would be very important for Faculties that are preparing themselves for review.

Chapter five describes the review process in detail from selection of peer reviewers, composition of the review team, reviewer profile, attributes and the conduct expected of reviewers, pre-review arrangements, review visits and review process.

Chapter six provides guidelines for writing the Programme Review Report including its purpose, structure, how the review judgment is arrived at both quantitatively and qualitatively and the procedure for submission of the report.

Appendix gives a template for the SER and a Format for preparation of Self-evaluation Report (SER); Glossary and Bibiliography are included at the end.

PART I

Quality Assurance System in   Higher Education
Dedicated to
Open and Distance Learning Mode

Chapter One

Perspectives of Quality Assurance in Higher Education Dedicated to Open and Distance Learning Mode

This chapter introduces the concepts and definitions of open and distance learning and quality in the context of higher education via open and distance learning (ODL) in dedicated ODL institutions such as the Open University of Sri Lanka (OUSL). It describes different approaches to quality assurance and importance of continuous improvement in quality towards excellence and quality culture. It also deals with, the context of Institutional Reviews.

1.1   Open and Distance Learning (ODL)

Open learning (OL) is an educational philosophy that in which particular value is attached to certain underlying principles. The major ones are:

• Openness.

• Learner centeredness.

• Flexibility in learning with respect to pace, time, place of study etc.

• Removal of unnecessary barriers to access.

• Recognition of prior learning.

• Technology to mediate learning;

• Industrial process.

• Curriculum and courses in the public domain.

Distance education (DE) is an educational process and a 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.

Open and Distance Learning (ODL) is an amalgam of the two approaches of education namely, Distance Education (DE) and Open Learning (OL) that focuses on expanding access to learning..

Open and Distance learning may be available through institutions exclusively created for that purpose such as Open Universities. Conventional universities may offer

certain programmes to off-campus students through distance learning alongside on-campus teaching (dual mode institutions).

Even though there has been an unprecedented expansion of ODL there are certain key issues in this field which are yet to be addressed. Some of the burning issues include quality, cost-effectiveness, assessment, lack of motivation and attrition.

In ODL the teaching function is shifted from the information transmitting performance of a teacher, to the transformative act of the teacher/tutor/instructor, engaging learners in attentive, responsive questioning of, and listening to, learners. Open and distance learning has brought a new division of labor into education and within it , a set of options for stakeholders about the location of enrolling and registering students; of developing , producing, reproducing and distribution of teaching materials; of tutoring, and supporting learners,; of assessing, evaluating and awarding credits (industrial process). Organization and management of ODL is thus more complicated than that of a conventional system.

Arising from the physical separation of learners from the teacher, use of media for bridging the gap between the learner and teacher and division of labor in the activities, functions, and processes of ODL are radically different from those found in traditional classroom based face to face system.

Assessing quality is a specific skill.in the context of open universities, quality of both the academic provision and of the ODL system have to be assessed against the formatted set of criteria and standards in the Manual. Usually peers in a team are specialists in a discipline and do not have much exposure in quality assessment of institutions in an ODL context. Therefore it is important that they read chapter One.

Several guiding principles underpin a set of overarching general indicators of success. These include, but not limited to:

- Retention, progression and completion
- Widening participation, equality and accessibility
- Social responsibility
- Employability
- Interdisciplinary
- Internationalization
- Engaged and satisfied learner experience
- Collaboration and cooperation
- Evidenced based scholarship for learning and teaching
- Learners as partners
- Focus on the learner
- Quality assurance, enhancement and evaluation
- Academic excellence
- Technology as enabler and driver
- Innovation to impact

•   Academic excellence

The quality concepts and principles for higher education through distance learning mode are thus built on all principles that apply generally to that of higher education, irrespective of the mode of delivery, and to those principles which characterize ODL provision.

1.2   What is Quality and how is it Measured

1.2.1   Quality

The concept of quality in higher education is multidimensional and encompasses all its functions and activities.

Described originally as "Fitness for Purpose" of a product the Chairman of the Commonwealth of Learning (2006) defined it as "fitness for purpose with minimum cost to society" which recognizes the diversity of stakeholders viz: students, prospective students, academic staff, funders, professional agencies, government, prospective employers and wider society.

As fitness for purpose "quality" is conceived in relation to the institutional vision, mission, and goals. It allows the institution/programme to demonstrate the achievement of its objectives according to the purpose of its mission and goals. The challenge is to achieve the goals, objectives/outcomes in an efficient and effective way and that is quality.
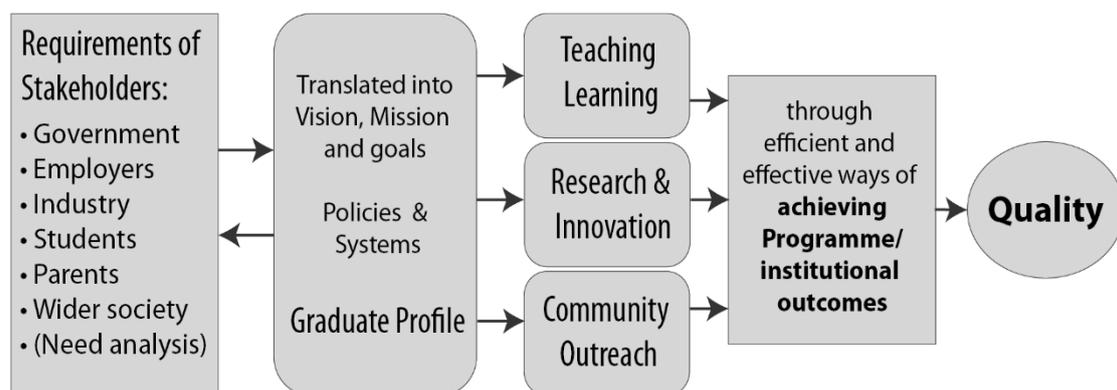
Figure 1.1 - Concept of Quality in relation to Stakeholders (adapted from DADD, 2010)

The figure shows:

•   Diverse stakeholders. (cage 1)

- Needs of stakeholders translated into Vision, Mission, Goals, Policies, and Regulations etc. to be reflected through Graduate Profile of the institution (cage 2)

- These to be delivered by the institution through the three missions of the institution, namely teaching and learning; research and innovation; community services (cage 3)

- In an effective and efficient manner with monitoring, feedback and reviews based on Standards. (Cage 4) leading to QUALITY (Figure 1.2)
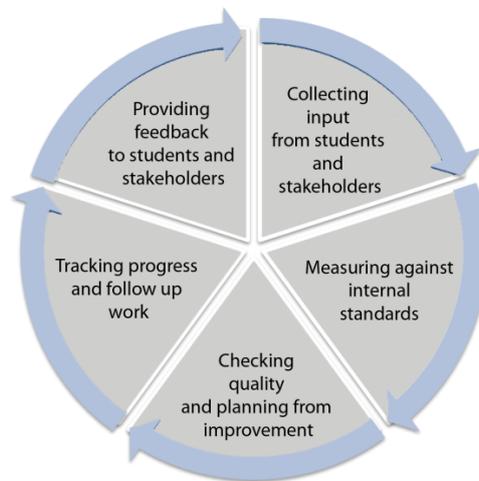
Figure 1.2 Quality Loop

Quality is considered as a continuous process and has two important elements: quality as a transformative process of changing individuals and quality as an enhancement process of changing institution, both focusing on the continuing search for improvement and a commitment towards quality culture. (Figure 1.-3)
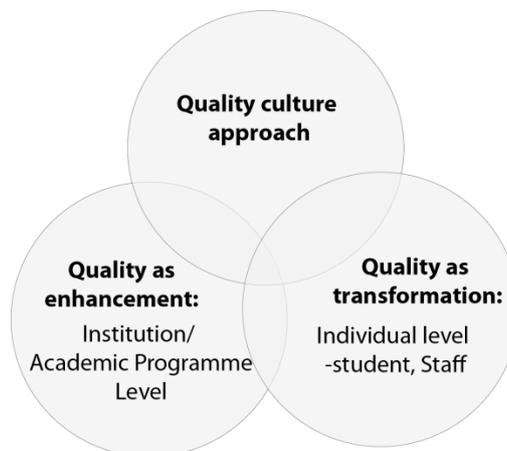
Figure 1.3 Concept of internal quality culture

1.2.2 Dimensions for Assessment of Quality

Assessing quality needs a yardstick or benchmark. In quality assessments, both internal and external, procedure will be discretionary and arbitrary if there is no framework against which to measure the scope of the reviews. Transparency, objectivity, and comparability between institutions are ensured by using an assessment structure with elements referred to as 'Criteria', 'Standards', and 'Best Practices'. They define what is being measured, how it is measured, and the unit of measurement (quantitative/qualitative). These dimensions have been agreed upon international practices and through extensive national stakeholder consultative process. Chapters Two and Three describe these dimensions in detail.

1.3 Quality Assurance and how is it approached.

1.3.1 Concept of Quality assurance

Quality assurance is an all-embracing term referring to an ongoing continuous process of evaluating (assessing, monitoring, maintaining, guaranteeing, and improving) the quality of higher education system, institution or a study programme. (Based on UNESCO definition)

Policies and processes are the main pillars of a coherent institutional quality assurance system that forms a cycle for continuous improvement and contributes to the accountability of the institution. Institutions should have a policy for quality assurance that is made public and forms part of their strategic management .The policy should be implemented through appropriate structures and processes while involving external participants. The institutional quality assurance processes must involve all sections of the institutions and be effectively integrated into normal planning and administrative processes. An institution must be committed to maintaining and improving quality through effective leadership and active involvement of teaching and other staff. Institutions should periodically analyses the relevance of their quality assurance system and make the necessary adjustments.

Universities being public institutions have to exercise their responsibility for maintaining quality and standards through periodic internal monitoring Though this responsibility lies primarily with the institution itself where the power to control or change to practice exists, periodic external review by an independent agency will give further credibility in the eyes of the public and satisfy social accountability. This is the basic rationale for periodic external review.

1.3.2 Approaches to quality assurance

As illustrated in Figure 1.4 main approaches to quality assurance are

i)   quality assessment,
ii)   quality audit and
iii)   accreditation.
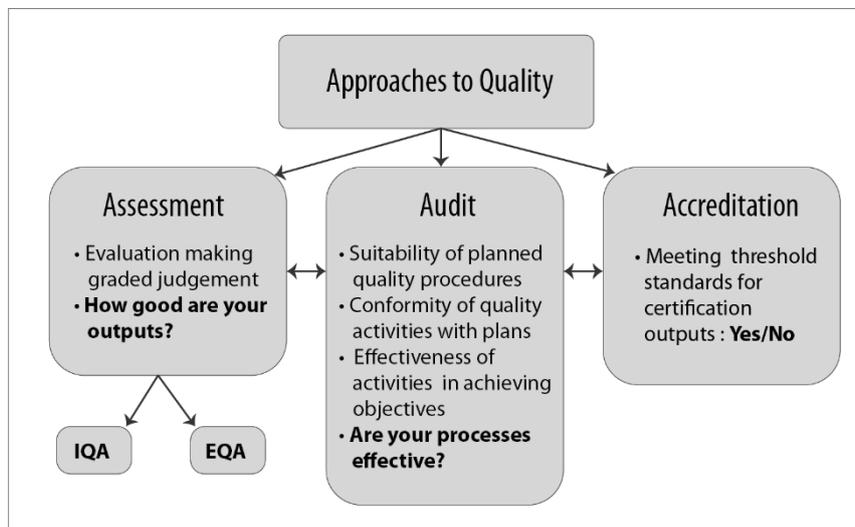
Figure 1.4 - Approaches to Quality

Audit focuses on suitability of planned quality procedures, conformity of quality activities with plans, effectiveness of activities in achieving objectives. It asks the question "Are your processes effective"?

Assessment is an evaluation which makes graded judgment about quality and asks "How Good are your outputs?" It might be based on self- review internally by the institution Itself, and referred to as Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) or based on assessment by an External team of peers and referred to as External Quality Assurance (EQA)

Accreditation is a process in which an institution's services and operations are examined by an external accrediting agency to determine if applicable standards are met. If they are met the institution receives accreditation. Accreditation creates confidence and trust about the quality of the University/HEI and its programmes and awards amongst students, parents, prospective employers, and the general public.Sri Lanka has not yet moved towards accreditation.

1.3.3 Internal Quality Assurance

Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) is the main element of the quality assurance system. It is a structured internal cyclic system in a higher education institutions devoted to setting up, maintaining, and enhancing the quality of teaching, student learning experience, research and community outreach. Internal QA ensures that institutions have policies, mechanisms and procedures aiming at monitoring, evaluation and

improving its activities and services within it. It will assess the current level of performance, identify strategic priorities for improvement, development and implementation plans, monitor and make adjustments, thus continuously promoting and enhancing the quality of the core activities as a whole. The cycle is referred to as "Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA). (Figure1.5)
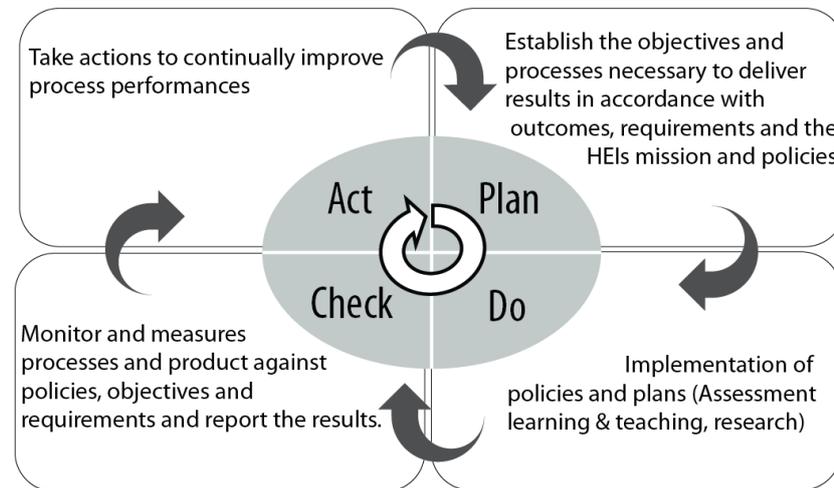
Figure 1.5 PDCA Cycle

PDCA cycle in the case of an institution will include:

• **P**lan to include policies and procedures for management; determination of stakeholder- needs, graduate competencies in compliance with SLQF; expected learning outcomes at different levels; outcome-based curriculum

• **D**o- Implementation of the policies and plans

• **C**heck-assessing the current level of performance through monitoring and feedback from all stakeholders, analyzing the results; identifying weaknesses and identify strategic priorities for improvement

• **A**ct-development and implementation of improvement plans

Thus it continuously promotes and enhances the quality of the core activities towards a quality culture. Emphasis is now on developing quality culture to ensure continuous enhancement of quality in their activities and services through internal quality monitoring.

It is recognized that it is difficult to create a culture of quality through a top-down process. It can only take root when the staff concerned take ownership of the process. The more level of oversight set up for implementing quality assurance the lower the extent of faculty ownership. The responsibility for quality needs to be situated as

close as possible to the operational end of a given process. Faculty should engage every member in undertaking regular monitoring and reporting. However the top institutional leadership has an important role to play by championing the cause of quality assurance providing the necessary resources and training for the staff.

In the universities with the establishment of Internal Quality Assurance Unit (IQAU) and faculty-wise Internal Quality Assurance Cells (IQAC) in the university with clearly defined terms of reference, it is expected that quality of university would be internally monitored towards continuous improvement. IQAU has to report its activities to the Senate and Council .It would be desirable to have this report as a regular agenda item in the Senate. IQACs coordinate all quality assurance activities within the faculty in liaison with the IQAU. A report from the IQAC has to be a regular agenda item in the Faculty Board.

1.3.4 External Quality Assurance (EQA)

Addressing accountability of different stakeholders requires assessment by an external peer team appointed by the QAC through a cyclical external quality assurance Process. The process of EQA involves four stages as in Figure 1.6

Stage I Pre-determined Criteria and Standards related to each one of the Criterion on which to base the assessment process.

Figure 1.6- External quality assurance model

Stage II Self-evaluation and preparation of Self Evaluation Report (SER) by the institution/programme

Stage III Validation of the SER by a team of peers through desk review and site visits the institution and submit recommendations to the UGC-QAAC through a Peer Review Team Report

Stage IV The scrutiny and approval of the Peer Review Team Report by the UGC-QAAC and publication of results.

External review process is detailed in section 1.5.

1.3.5 Functional link between internal quality assurance and external quality assurance.

Total quality improvement system of an institution is built on two pillars, namely internal quality assurance (IQA) and external quality assurance (EQA).Quality assurance is a continuous process that does not end with external feedback or report or its follow up process within the institution. The functional link between the two components is illustrated in Figure 1.7 As depicted and implied through closed circuit diagram IQA should be the main element of quality assurance system where it should undertake regular monitoring and reporting to higher management of the institution for appropriate corrective measures for rectification of shortcomings. The self-assessments undertaken regularly,with documented activities, outcomes, improvements planned, provides the foundation to prepare the Self Evaluation Report (SER) for external quality assurance (EQA) .The SER so prepared forms the basis for external quality reviews to undertake external assessment for quality. Thus SER truly reflects the internal operations and activities of the institution, internally monitored through IQA procedures.
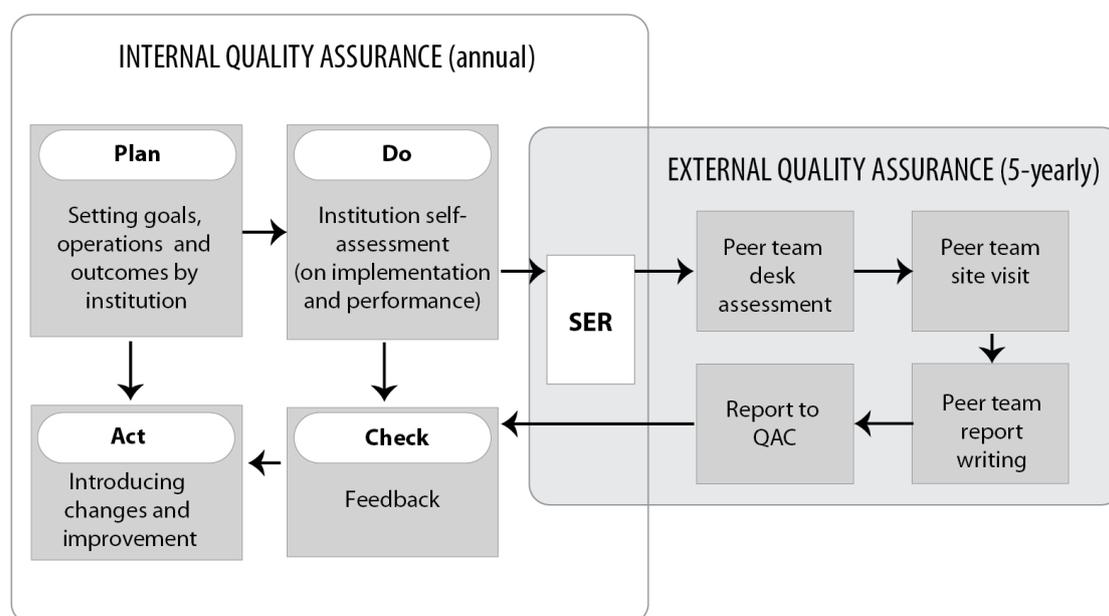
Figure 1.7 Quality assurances as a continuous cycle

In addition in this closed circuit (Figure 1.7) the Institutional Review Report coming out of the EQA process is expected to serve as feedback to IQA. Internal quality assurance in turn shall spearhead the follow up actions on the findings, shortcomings highlighted and recommendations made therein in the review report.

As mentioned, internal quality assurance is supported by periodic external review. The two processes have to be harmonized for maximum benefit. Findings of one inform the other. Both are essential for maintaining and enhancing quality. The interaction between the Internal Quality Assurance and the External Quality Assurance is depicted in Figure 1.7

This will ensure that the institution is heading in the right direction towards continuous improvement in all aspects, thus enabling to reach the status of 'Centre of Excellence' as a HEI and also to maintain the status once it is achieved.

1.3.6   Development of Quality Assurance in the Open University of Sri Lanka

Need for QA tools and systems for higher education through open and distance learning (ODL)

With the increasing acceptance of ODL as widening access to higher education, research suggests that it has become increasingly crucial that quality assurance process is developed and maintained if the ODL provision has to be relevant and effectively functional so that the products have the same recognition as the conventional.

A frequently cited challenge by ODL practitioners is that many quality assurance agencies and accreditation bodies use standards and indicators that have been developed for conventional universities to assess and review ODL institutions and programmes.

However international best practices recognize that arising from the physical separation of the learner from the teacher, the separation of programme design, delivery, learner support and assessment and the use of media and technologies to bridge the gap between the learner and the teacher, the functions and the processes in ODL are radically different from those found in traditional face-to-face classroom teaching. Accommodating these differences in QA systems has been essential in establishing the credibility of ODL (World Bank 2002;Damme , 2002; ADB 2012) Thus a number of open universities have developed QA tools and systems in the institutional context. The quality assurance of OUSL has to be viewed within this broad perspective.

Development of QA system for The Open University of Sri Lanka (OUSL)

In 2001 a committee on Quality Assurance (QA) was formed within the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Directors (CVCD) and University Grants Commission (UGC). This committee initiated all QA related activities including developing the QA Handbook for Universities (2002), In December 2004, a Standing Committee for Quality Assurance and Accreditation (QAA) was appointed by the UGC. Simultaneously a unit for quality assurance and accreditation was formed within the UGC .This was supported by the Improving Relevance and Quality of Undergraduate Education (IRQUE) project of the 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 of all conventional universities and The Open University of Sri Lanka (OUSL) were conducted using the Quality Assurance Handbook for Sri Lankan Universities (2002).

The Quality Assurance Committee established at OUSL in 2004 developed a QA framework for ODL institutions and programmes in collaboration with Commonwealth of Learning (COL) by customizing the generic guidelines in the QA framework for DE institutions developed by the Asian Association of Open Universities (AAOU-COL 2002), and published it as "Framework for Quality Assurance in Open and Distance Learning in Sri Lanka "(2006).Thereon OUSL used this to guide the internal quality assurance in all its activities.

In 2007 a milestone achieved by the Distance Education Modernization Project, (DEMP) of the MOHE and the Asian Development Bank (2003-2009), was a 'home grown 'quality assurance system of accreditation standards and performance standards and evaluation criteria developed for ensuring quality in distance higher education through a very extensive substantial development phase over two years and with wide range of inputs from OUSL , national and international experts. This was internationalized by COL to make it into a generic document applicable across commonwealth countries and published by. COL and, UNESCO as "Quality Assurance Toolkit, Distance Higher Education Institutions and Programmes" (Coomaraswamy Uma et al 2009). This endeavor brought international recognition to the Sri Lankan quality standards.

The performance indicators specified for each quality standard in the Toolkit are used to conduct self-assessment of all activities for continuous quality improvement.

In 2015 decision was made by the UGC that while the conventional universities would be evaluated using "Manual for Institutional Review of Sri Lankan Universities and higher Education Institutions" The Open university of Sri Lanka should be evaluated using the Quality Assurance Toolkit for Distance Higher Education :Institutions and Programmers ".

To keep abreast with the standards used to evaluate the conventional universities in "Manual for Institutional review of Sri Lankan Universities and Higher Education Institutions "(2015) the assessment 'Standards' in the QA Toolkit have been updated in this manual. This Manual will effectively replace the use of Quality Assurance Toolkit for Distance Higher Education: Institutions and Programmes" for reviewing OUSL Programmes in Sri Lanka.

1.4 Distinction between, Institutional Review and Programme Review and Subject review

Institutional review analyses and tests the effectiveness of an institution's processes for managing and assuring the quality of academic activities undertaken by the university /HEIs. It evaluates the extent to which the internal quality assurance schemes can be relied upon to maintain the quality of provision of educational programmes over time.

Subject/Programme review evaluates the quality of a student's learning experience at programme level, effectiveness of Faculty's processes for managing and assuring quality of study programmers, student learning experience and standards of awards within a programme of study. It is about management and assuring quality at programme level.

The external review process that is referred to as Institutional Review (IR) constitutes the focus of this manual.

Programme Review – Purpose

Programme Review is concerned with how a Faculty /Institute assures itself and the wider public that the quality and standards of its programmes of study are being achieved and maintained. Programme review is distinct from, though still closely linked to, Institutional review. Institutional review is concerned with university-wide processes, which maintain an appropriate environment for delivery of quality programmes of study. Programme review on the other hand evaluates the quality of student learning at programme level in greater depth focusing on curriculum, course and module planning and delivery and student support and assessment in finer detail.

The overall purpose of programme review is to achieve accountability for quality and standards, and by using a peer review process to promote adopting and internalizing good practices, inculcating quality culture and facilitating continuous improvement of the study programme. It is also meant to instill confidence, achieve accountability , provide information, promote improvement and showcase innovation in respect of the programme of study.

Programme Review – Scope

The scope of the programme review has been carefully determined. The criteria prescribed for scrutiny of programmes of study in this manual have been selected by giving due consideration to the feedback received from the academia based on their experience from stakeholder consultations and the external reviews. Focus of the programme review has been captured in the six criteria listed below:

- Programme Management

- Programme Design and Development

- Course Design and Development

- Learning Infrastructure, Resources, and Learner Support

- Learner Assessment and Evaluation

- Innovative and Healthy Practices

Programme Review – Requirements

Programme review is offered to all undergraduate (Bachelors/Bachelors Honours) degree programmes which have completed at least one cycle or graduated at least one batch of students. The programmes need to be aligned to Level 5 or 6 of the Sri Lanka Qualification Framework (SLQF 2015).Further, there has to be willingness by programme staff to critically self-evaluate their programme under the given criteria and gather evidence of achieving the required standards . Internal Quality Assurance Units (IQAU) and the Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) have a major role to play in facilitating the process.

PART II

Quality Assessment
Criteria, Best Practices and Standards

Chapter Two

Criteria and Best Practices

The desired attributes of quality assessment in higher education are objectivity, transparency and comparability. These attributes are assured by defining a quality framework comprising dimensions for quality and an assessment structure against which a judgment on quality could be made. Adopting the same principle and approach, Part II of this Manual for Review of OUSL Undergraduate Study Programmes has defined a quality framework and assessment structure for the review of study programmes offered by the University. The quality framework consists of six 'criteria' for study programmes, and corresponding 'best practices' and 'standards' for each criterion. This Chapter describes the 'Criteria' and respective 'Best practices.

2.1 Criteria

The criteria reflect the key aspects of a study programme's development and operations, including inputs that facilitate processes to achieve the desired outcomes.. Accordingly, six criteria encompassing key aspects of a programme were identified as most appropriate for study programme review after careful study of several documents including the Toolkit for Quality Assurance of Distance Higher Education Institutions and Programmes (COL, 2009), Manual for Quality Assurance of External degree Programmes and Extension Courses (UGC/WB-HETC 2014)Manual for Institutional Review of Sri Lankan Universities and Higher Educational Institutions (UGC/ WB-HETC,2015), Manual for Review of Undergraduate Study Programmes of Sri Lankan Universities and Higher Education Institutions (UGC/WB-HETC 2015) and QA Manuals adopted by QA Agencies of other countries. . In programme review process, the performance of study programme in relation to all six criteria is considered for arriving at a judgment on the study programme as a whole.

The six criteria selected for Study Programme Review are listed below:
Criteria 1:   Programme Management
Criteria 2:   Programme Design and Development
Criteria 3:   Course Design and Development
Criteria 4:   Learning Infrastructure, Resources and Learner Support
Criteria 5:   Learner Assessment and Evaluation
Criteria 6:   Innovative and Healthy Practices

2.2   Best Practices

Best Practices are ideally the best known methods, techniques, or proven processes used to achieve an end goal-'Standard). They may be looked upon as sign posts that lead towards the goal of excellence. They contribute to the efficient and effective functioning of the university/programme.

For each of the above criteria, quality principles are stated as 'best practices'. The 'best practices' are related to inputs, processes and outcomes of respective criteria. In principle, any institutional approach, policies, strategies, operations, procedures, etc., become qualified as 'best practices' only if such 'practices' had resulted in value addition to any aspect of operations in the study programme. These are derived empirically and are considered as forerunners of the "standards" that are used as sign posts of excellence, and hence are expected to facilitate the study programme(s) in achieving excellence.   Brief descriptions of best practices and/or processes with respect to the six 'Criteria' are given below.

2.3   Criteria and Corresponding Best Practices

Criterion 1 - Programme Management
- The Faculty has an organizational structure which is adequate for effective management and execution of its core functions such as programme design, development and delivery, student support , research and outreach activities in consistent with and supportive view of the University's vision and mission to engage in ODL.

- The Faculty must have linkages with all levels of stakeholders outside the Faculty for the purposes of curriculum planning ,implementation and review.

- Mechanisms to ensure functional integration and comparability of educational quality must be established for programmes conducted in Regional/Study centers that are geographically separated

- The Faculty should have a comprehensive interconnected and institutionalized committee system responsible for programmes that takes into consideration , among others, internal and external consultation, feedback, market needs analysis, and employability projections

- The Faculty must have a clear statement on the criteria and processes of student selection, .The criteria and processes of selection including the need for prerequisite knowledge and skills must be published and disseminated to the public and students The admission policy for the programme must be monitored and reviewed periodically and in consultation with relevant stakeholders to improve the selection processes

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- The Faculty must have a well disseminated policy with clear criteria, mechanisms and processes,, to enable qualified students to transfer to another programme. The Faculty must have well defined and effectively disseminated policies, regulations and processes concerning credit transfers and credit exemptions

- The criteria for the appointment and the responsibilities of the academic leadership of the programme must be clearly stated. It must be held by those with the appropriate qualifications and experience, and with sufficient authority for curriculum design, delivery and review. It should take on the responsibility of creating a conducive environment to generate creativity and innovation in delivery and services.

- The administrative staff of the Faculty must be appropriately trained , technically competent, and sufficient in number to support the implementation of the programme and related activities, and to ensure good management and deployment of the resources

- The Action Plan of the Faculty is up to date, designed and developed in alignment with the University's corporate plan. The Action Plan reflects the Faculty's vigilance on new trends in the educational sphere nationally and globally, and its activities demonstrate the Faculty's readiness to embrace innovative initiatives for progressive development; Action Plan is implemented as planned and the progress is regularly monitored.

- The Faculty complies fully with national and institutional administrative and financial regulations and guidelines in effecting general administration and financial management; these are documented as Standard Operational Procedures/Manual of Procedures/Management Guide, and circulated among all relevant stakeholders to ensure compliance.

- The Faculty recognizes the value of stakeholder commitment and allegiance to the institution; stakeholder consultation is assured through participatory approach promoted through a mix of formal and informal mechanisms such as standing committees, ad-hoc committees, units, etc., which encourage wider stakeholder participation, teamwork, transparency, responsibility and accountability.

- The Faculty has the policy and practice to adhere to the annual academic calendar enabling the students to complete the programme and graduate at the stipulated time.

- The Faculty publishes a Handbook/Prospectus which provides general information on the history and current status of the Faculty, brief descriptions of study programme(s)/courses offered, pre-requisites for enrollment, intended learning outcomes (ILOs)of the programmes/courses, completion requirements, learning resources, student support services, disciplinary procedures, welfare measures, students' rights and responsibilities, and grievance redress mechanisms both in print and electronic forms; the Handbook/Prospectus is disseminated and communicated to students/prospective students prior to registration. Each applicant before enrollment is fully informed as to the nature of the training provided and understands the responsibilities and demands of the programme.

- The Faculty publishes a study programme Prospectus which provides relevant information on the curricula of the study programme(s) and courses offered, options available to exit at different levels, compulsory and optional courses, examination procedures and grading mechanisms, graduating requirements, examination by-laws, etc.; the Prospectus is distributed among the students at the time enrollment.

- The Faculty maintains an up-to-date website, which provides information about the faculty and links to all publications such as Handbook, study programme Prospectus(s), by-laws, special notices, announcements, etc.

- Faculty conducts an induction/ orientation programme for all new students to facilitate their transition from school to university environment, prepare them for ODL and provide information on the University and Faculty, facilities and resources available, support services and the study programme.

- The Faculty should have mechanisms to ensure that it securely maintains and updates permanent records of all students accessible only to authorized personnel, with provision to secure backups of all files.

- The Faculty should have ICT facilities to support distance learners (eg. learning management system, digital/virtual library, video conferencing , online help desk etc.) and maintain up to acceptable current standards and capacities. There is a policy regarding the selection and effective use of electronic devices, internal and external networks and other effective means of using ICT in the programme. This includes coordination with the library services.

- The Programme has sufficient and appropriate physical facilities and educational resources to ensure its effective delivery. The physical facilities must comply with the relevant laws, and with health and safety regulations.

ICT and related facilities (for example, learning management system, digital/virtual library, videoconferencing, online helpdesk) must be provided for and maintained up to acceptable current standards and capacities. There should be a policy regarding the selection and effective use of electronic devices, internal and external networks, and other effective means of using ICT in the programme. This includes coordination with library services. The facilities are user friendly including to those with special needs.

- The educational resources, services and facilities should be periodically reviewed to assess the quality and appropriateness for current education and training through ODL

- The Faculty has adopted the University approved Code of Conduct /Charter for Students; it is communicated to all students at the point of enrollment with measures in place to ensure the adherence by students with the conditions prescribed therein; violators are promptly dealt with and deterrent measures are taken as and when required.

- There is a clear and documented academic staff recruitment policy .The staff-student ratio for the programme must be appropriate to the teaching-learning methods and comply with the programme discipline standards, taking into consideration the uniqueness and flexibility of the ODL. The faculty must clarify the roles of the academic staff in teaching, research, and scholarly activities, consultancy, community services and administrative functions. The policy of the faculty must reflect an equitable distribution of responsibilities among the academic staff.

- As a part of the Faculty's commitment to provide a conducive work environment and ensure staff loyalty, various incentives should be put in place to reward innovation in delivery, learner support ,course design etc. for distance learners

- Opportunities (including funding) are provided for academic staff participation in professional, academic, and other relevant activities at the national, and international levels. It should appraise this participation   and demonstrate that it utilizes the results of this appraisal for improvement in the student experience.

- The Faculty has clearly defined list of duties, work norms and codes of practice for all categories staff in compliance with national and/or institutional guidelines; these are communicated, implemented, monitored and remedial measures taken as and when required.

- The Faculty implements a performance appraisal system prescribed by the University/HEI, and the **appraisal outcomes are considered for** annual increments and promotions of the staff.

- The faculty must provide mentoring tools, support and technology for self-learning and formative guidance for new academic staff as part of its staff development programme. The Faculty has adopted a policy and strategy to enhance the performance of staff by providing regular training and rewarding high performers.

- The Faculty considers quality as a strategic objective and has established an internal quality assurance cell (IQAC) as per the guidelines issued by the UGC and the operational by-laws/guidelines approved and adopted by the University/HEI; the IQAC undertakes regular monitoring of all aspects of the study programme and reports to the Faculty Board in a regular basis; in executing its functions, the IQAC liaises with the internal quality assurance unit (IQAU) of the University/HEI.

- The Faculty adopts the policy to consider the guidelines and standards prescribed in the Sri Lanka Qualifications Framework (SLQF) and Subject Benchmark Statements (SBSs) in designing and development of curricula of study programmes and courses.

- The Faculty adopts the policy on, and procedures for facilitating internalization of outcomes-based education and student-centered learning (OBE-SCL) approach in educational provision; all academic staff members are trained and equipped with knowledge and skills to apply OBE-SCL tools and techniques in the design and development of curricula, and modify teaching, learning and assessment procedures.

- The Faculty has put in place the policy on and procedure for programme approval, and discontinuation; introduction of revised/updated curricula commences only after giving adequate notice and with a new batch of students; similarly, a programme is terminated after giving adequate notice to ensure the students enrolled into the programme complete their education without any disruption.

- The Faculty has the policy and procedures for monitoring the implementation of curriculum; obtaining student feedback, peer observation, graduate satisfaction surveys at exist point, employability studies, employer feedback surveys, etc., and using the findings for effecting continuous improvement of the study programme.

- The Faculty recognizes the value of collaboration with national and international partners; it has established collaborative partnerships with national and foreign universities/HEIs/organizations for academic and research cooperation.

- The Faculty/ has put in place mechanisms to optimize the learning environment through provision of student support mechanisms such as academic counseling/mentoring system, student counseling system, access to health care services and recreational and sports facilities, and security and safety measures.

- The Faculty has approved by-laws pertaining to examinations, student discipline and appropriate guidelines for student unions; those are made widely available to both staff and students; violators are promptly dealt with and effective remedial and deterrent measures are taken as and when required.

- The Faculty offers special support and assistance services for students with special needs or differently-abled students.

- The Faculty complies fully with the institutional policy to promote gender equity and equality (GEE) and deter any form of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV); it adopts appropriate strategies and executes activities to promote GEE and deter SGBV amongst all categories of staff and students.

- The Faculty adopts the policy of zero-tolerance to ragging; it adheres fully with institutional by-laws on students' discipline and implements necessary measures through coordinated efforts involving academics, faculty student counselors, and proctors, marshals and security staff to prevent and deter any form of intimidation/harassment among students.

- The Faculty ensures that its human resources profile is comparable with national and international norms with high percentage of academics having doctoral degrees, research grants and scientific communications in national and international referred/indexed journals.

- The Faculty requires all newly recruited academic staff to undergo an induction programme which helps them to acquire minimum competencies required to perform satisfactorily in their assigned roles; proactively encourages all newly recruited academic staff to acquire required post-recruitment qualifications and competencies to perform their core duties as soon as possible, and to work towards progressing into higher grades at the prescribed points of time in their service without undergoing stagnation; the

capacity of all staff is continuously upgraded and enhanced through provision of in-service, continuing professional development (CPD) programmes of which the impact is monitored, and remedial actions are taken as and when required.

- The Faculty motivates the staff and students to adopt outcome-based education and student-centered learning (OBE-SCL) approach and provides adequate facilities to practice OBE-SCL approach in education provision.
- The Faculty ensures that student have access to library facility which is networked, and holds up to date print and electronic forms of titles, electronic data bases and provides other facilities such as reprography, internet, inter-library loan mechanism, etc., along with a user-friendly service.

- The Faculty has put in place sufficient ICT facilities including access to computer terminals and internet connectivityand technical guidance as and when required for students to acquire ICT skills.

- The Faculty has a well-resourced English Language Teaching Sub-unit or Cell or Centre (ELTC) that provides students with instructional training and practical guidance in learning and use of English as a **second language (ESL) in their academic activities.**

- The Faculty ensures that the students are provided with training opportunities to acquire 'soft skills'/'life skills' required to succeed in the 'word of work' through regular career guidance programmes conducted by the Career Guidance Unit (CGU) of the University, and by embedding those skills into the curricular activities.

- The Faculty has coordinating structures and mechanisms to encourage and facilitate students to engage in multicultural programmes to promote social harmony and ethnic and cultural cohesion among students of diverse backgrounds.

- The Faculty annually collects and records information about learners' destination after graduation (tracer studies) and uses this data for continuous improvement of the programme.

- The Faculty must have a defined process by which the curriculum is established, reviewed and evaluated. Process of designing the programme must include the viewpoints of various stakeholders: academics, administrators, and ODL learners to ensure that perspectives of people who will receive and deliver ODL programmes are considered.

- There should be co-curricular activities that will enrich learners' experiences and foster personal development and responsibility.

- The university should have intellectual property rights and licensing policies for learning materials and innovations

Criterion 2 - Programme Design and Development

- The Faculty adopts a participatory approach through a programme /curriculum team, inclusive of academic staff, non-academic/ technical staff, students, alumni and external stakeholders (e.g., industry, key employers   and professional bodies) in the design and approval of programme and courses adopting an outcome-based education (OBE) approach where teaching learning strategies and assessment strategies are aligned with programme/course learning outcomes.

- Programme is consistent with the mission, goals and objectives of the University. It is designed to meet the needs of all stakeholders, national, regional and global requirements, and to reflect latest developments and practices in the field of study.

- Programme complies with the SLQF with respect to the title of the award, volume of learning, level descriptors and qualification descriptors, and is also guided by other external reference points such as Subject Benchmark Statements and requirements of relevant professional bodies.

- The programme must define its aims, objectives, and learning outcomes developed in alignment with graduate profile and make them known to internal and external stakeholders. Its objectives must reflect the key elements of the outcomes of higher education that are in line with the national and global developments. The programme aims and objectives and learning outcomes must be developed in consultation with relevant stakeholders, particularly potential employers principal stakeholders which should include the academic staff.

- They must be consistent with and supportive of the university's vision and mission to engage in ODL. Programme design and development procedures take into consideration entry and exit pathways including fallback option.

- The programme must define the competences that the learner should demonstrate on completion of the programme as stipulated in the SLQF (2015) and cover mastery of body of knowledge; practical skills; social skills and responsibilities; values, attitudes and professionalism; problem solving and scientific skills; communication, leadership and team skills; information management and lifelong learning skills ;and managerial and entrepreneurial

skills. The programme should also specify the link between competencies expected on completion of studies and those required during the career undertakings and further studies.

- The programme must demonstrate how the component courses contribute to the fulfillment of the programme's learning outcomes. The programme must show how the learner is able to demonstrate the learning outcomes through assessments.

- The programme aims, objectives, and learning outcomes should be periodically reviewed in consultation with a wider range of stakeholders that may include the alumni, industry, community, civil society organizations and international peers

- Curriculum is enriched by incorporating vocational, professional/ semi-professional, interdisciplinary, and multidisciplinary courses either as core and/or optional/ elective components.

- Where relevant, curriculum recognizes diversity among students and addresses issues of gender, cultural and social diversity, equity, social justice and ethical values.

- Programme is organized as courses/modules which incorporate required sequential core and optional elements and maintains an appropriate balance of theoretical, practical, and experiential knowledge aiming to impart competencies at the appropriate level of study as in SLQF.(2015) Courses/ modules of the programme are structured in a manner to progressively increase the challenges on students intellectually in terms of skills, knowledge, conceptualization and autonomy of learning, to promote progression of students from one level to the other.

- Where work-based placement/ internship is a part of a programme of study, the Faculty ensures that ILOs are clearly identified; contribute to the overall and coherent aims of the programme; appropriately assessed jointly by the Faculty/Institute and the workplace using a structured marking scheme where relevant. Faculty/Institute informs the students of specific responsibilities relating to their work-based placement/ internship prior to the assignment.

- The Faculty has identified key outcome-based performance indicators for the programme, such as student progress and success rates, learners' satisfaction with the programme, cost-effectiveness of the programme, and employability of graduates, admission rates to advanced degree programmes and scholarship / fellowship awards and enables the learners to attain them.

- The programme offered is duly approved by Faculty/Senate/Council/UGC The programme approval criteria include the design principles underpinning the programme (e.g., outcome based and student centered learning approach), title of the award, volume of learning, level descriptors and qualification descriptors, as per SLQF (2015) stipulations; course contents, teaching/ learning and assessment strategies, physical and human resources and learner support, monitoring, evaluation and review arrangements and other relevant details. Policy and procedures on this should be contained in By-laws, Rules and Regulations

- The Faculty ensures that the principles to be considered when programmes are designed (such as balance of the programme, awards, and titles, resources available to support the programme) as well as the roles, responsibilities, and authority of different individuals/ bodies involved in programme design and approval, are clearly defined and communicated to them, so that they are clear about the design principles, sequence of the procedures and the final authority for approval.

- The requirement for approval of a new programme proposal by the academic authority of the University should also take into account of external reference points such as Subject Benchmark Statements published by the UGC,SLQF published World Bank HETC (2015) and requirements of professional bodies. It should look into academic grounds for the new programme, anticipated demand, academic content, assessment methods, teaching learning strategies, availability of learning resources.

- Self-learning materials should be so designed to be learner-friendly, self-explanatory, self-contained, self-directed, self-motivating, self-evaluating and help in self-learning.

- Self-learning materials are pilot tested and quality assured before release. Quality of learning materials is assured at various stages of production and delivery.

- Programme specifications are published with course specifications which include the ILOs in terms of knowledge, skills, attitudes and mindset; teaching learning methods that enable the outcomes to be achieved; assessment methods that enable the outcomes to be demonstrated; teaching learning resources; and compatibility of the programme with the SLQF and to any other relevant professional accreditation requirements.

- The programme information package/prospectus is made available and accessible in print and/or electronic forms. It is comprehensive and includes the entry requirements (including lateral entry if applicable), programme specification along with course specifications, credit hours, course contents, and recommended and supplementary readings. The information is accurate and up to-date.

- Academic programmes are regularly monitored, evaluated and reviewed by the IQAC as a part of the IQA process, to ensure that the programme remains current and valid in the light of emerging knowledge in the discipline, effective in delivery and assessment; information is used for continuous quality improvement.

- The programme may be considered only after a needs assessment has indicated that there is a need for the programme to be conducted using ODL mode and there is evidence to ascertain sustainability. The need analysis of the programme should involve feedback from external sources including market, learners, alumni, peers, whose commentaries should be utilized for the purpose of curriculum improvement

- The content of the programme must be periodically reviewed to keep abreast with scientific, technological, and knowledge development of the discipline , and with the needs of society. Student feedback must also be incorporated in the curriculum review process .Regular routine (annual) monitoring of courses to ensure that they remain current and valid in the light of developing knowledge in the discipline and practice in its application , to evaluate the extent to which the learning outcomes are being attained by the learners to evaluate the continuing effectiveness of the curriculum and of assessment strategy in relation to the learning outcomes. In contrast periodic reviews , at intervals not exceeding five years , enables programme teams to stand back and reflect on broader aspects of the programme learning outcomes, scope and depth of learning, market/employer requirements , review of the continuing validity and relevance of programmes offered. Reports compiled by such monitoring and reviews should be considered by the IQAC of the faculty and ensure that appropriate actions are taken to remedy any identified shortcomings.

- The programme content, approach, and teaching learning methods must be appropriate and support the achievement of the programme learning outcomes.

- There must be a variety of student-centered teaching learning methods in order to achieve the eight domains of the learning outcomes in SLQF and to ensure that learners take responsibility for their own learning

- The programme must involve the provision of appropriate learning materials for ODL learners who have to assume greater responsibility for their learning. The learning materials for the programme must be provided in the following ways: adopting existing materials; adapting existing materials; or creating original materials or any other appropriate approaches

- Curriculum should encourage multidisciplinary approaches to enhance the personal development of the learner through electives, study pathways and other means which should be monitored and appraised.

Criterion 3 – Course design and Development
- 'Programme' means an arrangement of courses that are structured for a specific duration and learning volume to achieve the intended learning outcomes of the programme and usually leading to an award of a qualification. workload of a study programme is defined as 1500 notional learning hours per academic year, with volume of learning described as credits and one credit is considered equivalent to 50 notional learning hours. with minimum number of credits to a course being one.

- In designing a particular course unit /course , its workload should be computed based on the total amount of learning activities a student is expected to complete in order to achieve the for seen learning outcomes . and the workload expressed in time should match the number of credits available for the course unit/course keeping in mind that minimum number of credits per course unit/course is one and number of credits per course unit /course should be indicated by whole numbers and that one credit is equivalent to 50 notional learning hours for a taught course , laboratory studies course or field studies/clinical work.

- Notional learning hours include direct contact hours with teachers/trainers, time spent in self-learning, preparation of assignments, carrying out assignments and assessments.

- Courses are designed based on learner-centered principles with teaching learning strategies, teaching methods, learner activities promoting engagement, use of appropriate ICTs, and contact sessions determined as part of the course design process and are clearly stated in the course learning materials, and communicated and discussed with learners.

- Course team approach is followed in design, development and delivery. Team includes faculty, who play an important role in content development, instructional designers, graphic designers, content editors, language editors,

media experts, whose roles and responsibilities are specified before commencement of tasks.

- Standard formats/templates for instructional design and development are in place and are used by the course team for effective instructional design and efficient course development.

- Content in a programme is organized into focused courses/ modules with the ILOs aligned with the programme ILOs (learning outcomes being statements that describe what learners should know, understand, and can demonstrate upon the completion of a course or study programme).

- Courses are designed to reflect latest developments and practices in the field of study.

- Course/module design is in alignment with the SLQF and reflects the expectations of the SBS, requirements of statutory/ regulatory bodies.

- Faculty develops standardized formats/templates/ guidelines for course/module design and development of courses for effective instructional design and efficient course development.

- Course ILOs are mapped against Programme ILOs to ensure that programme is coherent and comprehensive. Courses are designed to support learners in achieving the programme ILOs. Course content, teaching and learning and assessment strategies are constructively aligned with the course ILOs.

- Courses are designed based on student-centred principles with teaching-learning and assessment strategies and appropriate use of ICT; these are clearly stated in the course specifications, communicated to and discussed with students.

- Course ILOs, content, teaching learning and assessment strategies, learning resources, credit weight, notional learning hours as specified in SLQF etc. are contained in course specification which is made accessible to all students.

- Faculty/institute takes into account the needs of differently abled learners when designing courses.

- Choice of media and technology are integrated into the course design.

- The work load for learners with respect to courses complies with the SLQF guidelines and facilitate completion of each course within the intended period of time.

- Courses/ modules of the programme are structured in a manner to progressively increase the challenges on learners intellectually in terms of knowledge, skill, conceptualization and autonomy of learning.

- The Faculty provides prior training and necessary inputs to the staff involved in instructional design and development.

- The Faculty ensures that relevant staff are informed of the criteria against which the course proposals/specifications are assessed in the course approval process.

- The Faculty ensures provision of adequate physical and human resources for course design, approval, monitoring and review processes.

- Course approval decision is taken after full consideration of design principles, academic standards, and appropriateness of the available learning opportunities, monitoring and review arrangements and the course specification.

- Regular course evaluation is undertaken through internal monitoring by the IQAC, and the findings are used to improve the course content, delivery and assessment processes.

- Course/ module evaluation at the end of each course/module includes assessment of its content appropriateness, effectiveness of teaching, measurement of student learning outcomes and feedback; it is used for further improvement of the courses/modules.

- The instructional package provided to learners is comprehensive and contains learner-friendly description of the syllabus, course plans, learning outcomes at the programme level and at the course level, lesson level, assessment and evaluation details, credit hours, teaching learning strategies, academic calendar etc and should be made available both off-line and online.

- Teaching learning strategy should be linked to the learning outcomes of the course and should be congruent with student centered learning methods as exemplified in the SLQF(2015, pp15). Learner engagement with peers and with teachers is a powerful driver for quality teaching via ODL and should be encouraged and promoted.

- The Faculty provides course specification and timetable before the commencement of the programme/ course.

- The Faculty ensures that course/module ILOs, teaching learning strategies and assessment strategies are meticulously planned to be closely aligned with each other (constructive alignment) and are also appropriate and accessible to differently abled students if the programme caters to such learners.

- The Faculty promotes the use of blended learning to maximize student engagement with the curriculum.

- Faculty/Institute ensures that the staff draw upon their research, scholarship, or professional activity to enhance teaching.

- Teaching engages learners as partners in learning in ways that develop curiosity– driven investigative approaches, and maximizes each learner's personal and professional development; draws on real world scenarios so that the learners comprehend the application of knowledge; capitalizes on formative assessment and feedback as key components of teaching and learning.

- Teachers use information gained from assessment of learners to improve teaching.

- The teaching approach encourages learners to contribute to scholarly and creative work, discovery of knowledge and to relate theory and practice to real life situations through reflection.

- Teachers adopt both teacher-directed and student-centred methodologies, where learners learn by actively engaging in and interacting with the content and activities (active learning) with the role of the teacher being more as a guide and facilitator.

- Self-directed learning is encouraged through assignments which require learner to refer books, journals, internet and other resources; by incorporating investigative methodology into the learning processes through activities such as literature review, research project, collaborative project work and work-based placements.

- Teachers engage learners in research as a part of teaching learning strategy and support learners to publish their research**.**

- Teachers are sensitive to gender, culture, race and religion; they design teaching learning activities that are not discriminative and avoid making derogatory comments.

- Teachers are encouraged to promote innovative pedagogy and introduce ICT into teaching learning practices.

- Progress in implementing the teaching learning framework across each level of the programme are monitored and reported regularly to Heads of Departments, Dean and programme coordinator, and remedial actions taken when needed.

- Workloads of academics are equally distributed to ensure them to have adequate time to provide effective instruction, advice, conduct assessments, contribute to programme evaluation and improvement, and engage in continuous professional growth, while participating in scholarship and research.

- The Faculty uses key indicators such as adoption of outcome based approach in teaching andlearning, innovative teaching practices, degree of teacher-student interaction obtained through self-appraisal, peer evaluation and student feedback, for evaluating the performance of teachers for excellence in teaching and rewarding. Recognition and reward must be based on equitable work distribution, and meritorious academic roles using clear and transparent policies and procedures.

Criterion 4 – Learning Infrastructure, Resources and Learner Support

- The faculty must provide its learners with a conducive learning environment in which scholarly and creative achievements are nurture and learners are enabled to achieve the learning outcomes and competencies

- Learner support services should be given a prominent organizational status in the university and a dominant role in supplementing programme learning outcomes.

- The programme must have sufficient and appropriate facilities (physical, equipment, financial) to learners including to those with special needs, to support ODL and these are reflected in the long term plans and budget. ICT related facilities (learning management system, digital/virtual library, videoconferencing, virtual labs, online helpdesks etc.) must be provided for and maintained up to acceptable current standards and capacities. Adequate and appropriately qualified academic, administrative, and technical staff are

employed to meet the faculty objectives for learners. The facilities should be user friendly to all

- An effective human resource development system through a robust Staff Development Centre should be in place to train, re-train, and motivate faculty and staff for the roles and tasks they perform particularly with respect to application of new approaches to teaching learning and application of ICT in teaching and learning for ODL learners.

- The library resource centre must have adequate and up-to-date reference materials and qualified staff that meet the needs of the programme and research amongst academic staff and learners. These include provisions for adequate computers, and ICT-mediated reference materials.

- For practical-based programmes, adequate and appropriate equipments and physical facilities should be available and training must be adequately provided for technical and support staff at all learning centres (Regional and Study Centres). Effective mechanisms and procedures should be in place for maintenance and optimizing the use of resources.

- For research-based programmes and programmes with a substantial research component the faculty must provide adequate and suitable research facilities and environment. The quality and appropriateness for current education and training. The facilities should be user-friendly including to those with special needs.

- The university must have a policy regarding the selection and effective use of electronic devices, internal and external networks, and other effective means of using ICT in the programme.

- The learning environment should be regularly improved through renovations, building new facilities, and the acquisition of the latest and appropriate equipment to keep up with the development in educational practices and changes. The educational resources, services and facilities should be periodically reviewed to assess

- learner support (comprehensive information package, contact sessions, peer support, academic and personal counseling, online help) using a range of media is considered during programme development, and is built into the design of the course

- Potential delivery strategies (print, audio video tapes, CD-Roms, teleconferencing, videoconferencing, computer based instruction, computer

conferencing, online learning)are identified based upon the nature of learners, learning objectives, and instructional methods in the context of economic and logistical feasibility of different options.

- Instructors are given orientation, training, and support in their role as distance educators and /or online mentoring and tutoring.

- Criteria have been established which provide an objective evaluation of the learner's progress towards attaining the programme's specific educational objectives and consistently applies it to evaluate learner's progress

- Learner support system targets retention and prevent learners dropping out of the system.

- Learners must have access to appropriate, adequate, and continuous support services, such as physical, social, financial, recreational, and online facilities, counseling (academic and non-academic) and health services.

- Learner support services must be evaluated regularly to ensure their adequacy, effectiveness and safety. Learner support system targets retention and prevents drop outs.
- A designated administrative unit should be responsible for planning and implementing student support services staffed by individuals who have appropriate experience consistent with their assignments.

- Academic and career counseling must be provided by adequate and qualified staff and issues pertaining to counseling must remain confidential.

- An effective orientation to the programme must be made available to students to promote self-directed learning /self-manage learning. The orientation programme must be evaluated regularly with special attention given to out of district and international students as well as students with special needs.

- There should be a structured training and development plan to enhance the skills and professionalism of the academic and non-academic counselors

- There must be policy and programmes for active learner participation in areas that affect their welfare such as peer counseling, co-curricular activities, and community engagement

- Learner support provides a suitable learning environment that enables the learners to successfully achieve the ILOs. It comprises provision of facilities and learning/information resources (including adequate number of full-time

faculty members to support the mission of the institution and to ensure quality and integrity of its academic programmes, technological infrastructure, scientific laboratory facilities, language laboratories, library facilities, studio spaces, clinical practice sites as appropriate to the programmes/ subjects) and offering guidance to students in the ethical use of learning/ information resources.

- The Faculty provides an inclusive educational environment (Learning Resource Centers; academic/student counselling and mentoring; needy learner support; Career Guidance activities; Gender Equity Centers) considering the needs of individual students and diversity of the student body, in enabling learner development and achievement.

- Learners are clearly conveyed of their rights, responsibilities and conduct for successfully completing the programme through Student Charter/ Code of Conduct. There is a mechanism for learners to air grievances and make appeals relating to student support services.

- The Faculty offers, monitors and improves special support and assistance services for learners with special needs

- Faculty has academic counsellors who hold meaningful discussions with students focusing on areas such as student support, choice of courses, assessments, career paths etc. When sharing information, counsellors ensure that confidentiality is maintained to protect the rights of individuals.

- The Faculty monitors student learning experience, achievement and satisfaction annually to ensure that learning experiences are effective and help in achieving the desired learning outcomes.

- The Faculty facilitates and monitors on a continuous basis, learner progression from one level to the next and ensures successful completion of the programme towards gainful employment/ further advanced study; makes necessary improvements and facilitates the students who do not complete the programme successfully, to settle with the fallback options available.

- The Faculty enhances learning opportunities for learners by collaborating with employers who offer work-based learning or placement opportunities.

- Career information, advice and guidance are provided enabling learners to make choices about their future. Learners are empowered to access relevant information on the local, regional, national and international graduate labor markets, enabling them to make informed career choices.

- Career education, networking with alumni, information and guidance, and the development of career management skills along with soft skills are considered as inter-dependent parts of learner support; there is an institution-wide commitment to prepare students for their future careers.

- The Faculty has strategies to promote employability of learners and their ability to articulate their knowledge, skills, attitudes and values through working in partnership with external stakeholders such as employers, societies, local communities.

- Retention, progression, completion/ graduation rate, employment rate and per student cost are regularly monitored and remedial measures takes where necessary. The Faculty regularly and systematically gathers information about student satisfaction with the support services. Information collected is used for improvement of the services.

- The Faculty has fair, effective and timely procedures for handling learner complaints and academic appeals; thus ensures opportunity for students to raise matters of concern without risk of disadvantage.

- The Faculty implements the policy on gender equity and equality and supports opportunity for student leadership, creative activities and scholarship; promotes active academic/social interaction between the faculty and students.

Criterion 5– Learner Assessment and Evaluation
- Assessment strategy of student learning is considered as an integral part of the programmme design with clear relationship between assessment tasks and programme ILOs. The Faculty/Institute reviews and amends assessment strategies and regulations periodically as appropriate and ensures those being fit for purpose.

- Student assessment policies, regulations and processes underpin the setting and maintenance of academic standards with reference to SLQF and SBS, and where applicable, requirements of professional bodies.

- Assessment principles , methods and practices must be aligned with the learning outcomes and programme content. The links between assessment and learning outcomes in the programme should be reviewed periodically to ensure its effectiveness

- Assessment must be consistent with the levels defined in the SLQF, the eight domains of learning outcomes and the programme standards

- The frequency, methods and criteria of student assessment –including the grading criteria and appeal policies,-must be documented and communicated to students on the commencement of the programme. A variety of methods and tools must be used appropriately to assess the learning outcomes and competencies. Changes to student assessment methods must follow the established procedures and regulations and communicated to the student prior to their implementation. The various modes of assessment components (eg: assignment, project, report, test) must each be given a weight age contributing to the final grade. Assignment must be formative and/or summative, and the system reviewed at appropriate scheduled intervals.

- There must be mechanisms to ensure validity, reliability, consistency, currency and fairness of assessment methods. Specific procedures to cater for the examination of students must be put in place which could involve distant locations and simultaneous processes in many locations

- There must be mechanisms to ensure the security of assessment documents and records.

- There should be independent external scrutiny to evaluate and improve the management of student assessment

- The policy and procedures in handling plagiarism must be put in place and made aware to all students and staff. The faculty should have the appropriate software to detect cases of plagiarism/similarities among students' work.

- The methods of assessing should be comparable to ODL best practices locally and internationally

- Student assessment results must be communicated to the students within reasonable time, taking full advantage of the ICT capabilities to ensure efficient communications.

- The Faculty has approved procedures for designing, setting, moderating, marking, grading, monitoring and reviewing the assessment methods and standards of awards.

- The Faculty/Institute provides regular trainings on methods of assessments to staff and ensures that staff involved in assessing students are competent to undertake their roles and responsibilities, and have no conflict of interest.

- The assessment procedures and the weight age assigned for different components are clearly stated in the programme/course specifications and clearly communicated to students.

- The Faculty/Institute adopts well defined marking scale, marking scheme, various forms of internal second marking and procedures for recording and verifying marks etc, to ensure transparency, fairness and consistency.

- The Faculty/Institute considers involvement of external/second examiner is an essential part of the process of quality control and maintenance of standards. The external/second examiner assesses answers and assigns marks without seeing the marks given by the first examiner (blind marking). There is an established procedure (senate/relevant academic body approved) for reconciling the marks when there is a major discrepancy between the two sets of marks.

- Faculty/Institute and departments have a clear policy on consideration of the external examiners' reports, reporting lines and time frame to ensure that changes recommended in the examiners' reports are implemented. Assessment outcomes including external examiners' report are used to improve teaching learning and assessment methods.

- The Faculty/Institute ensures that policies, regulations and processes relating to assessments are clear and accessible to all stakeholders (students, academic staff, administrative staff, internal and external examiners).

- Assessment and examination policies, practices, and procedures provide differently abled students with the same opportunity as their peers to demonstrate the achievement of learning outcomes.

- Assessment strategies are aligned with ILOs and enable students to provide evidence of achieving the ILOs.

- Assessment methods are integrated into teaching and learning strategies. Formative assessments are used to provide feedback to students to facilitate achieving the ILOs.

- The Faculty/Institute implements and supports systematic and broad-based assessment which incorporates all aspects of learning including industrial training, field-based training, clinical training etc.

- The Faculty/Institute uses both formative and summative assessment to track individual student's learning, and uses this information to ensure the

achievement of ILOs; students are provided with regular, appropriate and timely feedback on formative assessment to promote effective learning.

- Assessment is designed and sequenced to provide a reasonable spread of assessment items throughout the course enabling students to monitor and progressively improve their capabilities.

- The Faculty/ Institute ensures the degree awarded complies with the SLQF.

- A complete transcript indicating the courses followed, grades obtained and the aggregate GPA/grade and class is made available to all students at graduation.

- Where a programme leads to registration of a professional/statutory body which issues a license to practice, clear information is made available to staff and students about specific assessment requirements that must be fulfilled for the award of the professional qualification.

- Students are informed before the commencement of the programme/course about the types of assessment, its alignment with the ILOs, timelines for assessment and releasing results, and issue of transcripts. Students are also made aware of code of conduct for preparation and submission of assignments, project work, and for sitting examinations.

- Assessment regulations are strictly enforced and disciplinary procedures are in place for handling breaches of examination regulations by students; malpractices such as plagiarism etc. and violation of codes of conduct.

- Examination boards and panels are responsible for timely release of results, recording assessment decisions accurately; such records are maintained for a designated period of time.

- The staff carries out all aspects of assessment in a way which ensures the integrity of the assessment process and in turn the integrity of academic standards of each award. Faculty ensures academic integrity of the award by maintaining confidentiality and declaring conflicts of interest where applicable.

Criterion 6 - Innovative and Healthy Practices

Note: Innovative and Healthy practices are considered as practices which would lead to enhancement of quality of training and learning experience and the students' outlook. However, it is difficult to prescribe a comprehensive list of best practices that will be applicable across all study programmes. Sample of such best practices which

are commonly seen in many academic institutions are listed below for consideration and adoption. Some of these may be widely adopted by most study programmes.

- The Faculty has a policy and strategy to encourage the staff and students to use Open Educational Resources (OER) to complement teaching and learning resources.

- The Faculty recognizes the complementarity between academic teaching, research and innovations; it has put in place coordinating structures and/or mechanisms to facilitate staff engagement in research and innovation, and interaction with community and industry.

- The Faculty recognizes the value of imparting basic skills in research, innovation and research communication to undergraduates; accordingly, the study programme contains an undergraduate research project as a part of the teaching and learning strategy; students are encouraged to disseminate the findings of such research through oral presentations and publications.

- The Faculty recognizes the value of exposing learners to the 'world of work' during their undergraduate career; the study programme contains an 'industrial' attachment/ training as a part of the teaching and learning strategy; it is operationalized through well designed and effective partnerships with 'industrial' establishments/ organizations.

- The Faculty has put in place appropriate mechanisms and procedures to encourage and facilitate academic staff to establish linkages with 'industry' and community; it uses such linkages to strengthen the reputation of the institution and expose the students to 'world of work'.

- The Faculty has adopted the policy to engage in income generating activities in order to diversify its sources of income; staff is encouraged and facilitated to engage in income-generating activities such as fee-levying programmes/ courses for external students/ consultancy and advisory services; it commercializes research and innovations, provides advanced laboratory and testing services, and uses such income to compliment the grants received from the Treasury.

- The Faculty/ promotes students and staff engagement in wide variety of co-curricular activities such as social, cultural and aesthetic pursuits, engagement with community and industry-related activities; such pursuits are well supported with physical, financial and human resources.

- The Faculty has a policy and mechanism for encouraging and rewarding student participation at innovation/sports/general knowledge/IQ competitions at regional/national levels without adversely affecting their progression in the academic programme.

- The Faculty has put in place the policy and strategy to ensure the study programme offered is relevant to the needs of the 'world of work', and its quality is comparable with national and global standards; it is ensured through regular revision of curriculum, close monitoring of its implementation and use of external examiners for moderation and second marking.

- The faculty has established mechanisms –through the use of latest technology and global networking-to access real time information and to identify up-to-date topics of importance for inclusion in the curriculum and its delivery

- Innovations to improve teaching and learning should be developed , supported and evaluated to keep abreast with the advancements in ODL.

- The link between assessment and learning outcomes in the programme should be reviewed periodically to ensure its effectiveness

- The faculty should consider introducing innovative assessment methods for ODL courses e.g., online synchronous assessment

- At the faculty student activities and student organizations should be facilitated to gain basic management and leadership experience, to encourage character building, to inculcate a series of belonging and responsibility and to promote active citizenship.

- The faculty should have adequate facilities, clear, formal, and well publicized policy regarding publications and encourage learners to be involved in publication activities.

- The faculty should foster active linkages with its alumni. and encourage the alumni to play a role in the development of the programme, preparing the students for their professional future

- The faculty must provide mentoring, tools, support and technology for self-learning and formative guidance for new academic staff as part of its staff development programme.

Chapter Three

Standards for Assessment

Quality assessment in higher education is a diagnostic review and evaluation of the university's compliance with a set of best practices and the degree of attainment of the "Standards' /Benchmarks prescribed by the UGC-QAAC. The best practices for each of the six criteria are summarized in Chapter two of this Manual. The best practices captured into specific statements termed 'Standards' are presented here but are not necessarily in the same order in which they appear in Chapter two. The standards are to be used by reviewers, to measure quantitatively or qualitatively, the degree of compliance with best practices and the level of attainment in the relevant standards. The 'standards' can also be used by academics and study programme managers for self-assessment.

3.1 Standards

Standards are usually established by an authority by general consensus. They define exactly haw a task should be completed or what the outputs and outcomes would be. Generally there is not much room for variance. Factors that affect inputs, processes, outputs and outcomes have been taken into account in developing these standards.

The standards defined here are used as reference points or 'sign posts' in quality assessment. In order to facilitate the use of standards in quality assessments examples of evidences are given against each standard.

The self-evaluation report (SER) of the /programme of study offered by the Faculty has to be formatted and presented in line with the criteria and respective standard provided in this chapter. A quality assessment uses evidence to make judgements objectively. In order to facilitate the use of standards in assessment, examples of evidence are given against each standard. During the review, the peer team after scrutiny of the documentary evidence provided for each standard, will measure its level of attainment and give a corresponding score.

The SER shall describe the level of compliance with, and internalization of 'best practices' and the degree of attainment of the corresponding standards with appropriate evidence. The peer review team following scrutiny of the documentary evidence presented in the SER at the 'desk review' will proceed to verify the evidence provided for each standard during the site visits and will assess the level of attainment of the respective standard and give a corresponding score.

To arrive at standard and criteria-wise assessments, examples of evidence and a score guide on a 4-point Likert scale are provided. The examples of evidence are not exhaustive and the university may present any relevant evidence deemed appropriate for a particular standard. The standards could be used for both IQA & EQA.

3.2 Criteria, Standards, Examples of Sources of Evidence and Score Guide

Criterion 1 - *Programme Management*

Scope   - Management of study programmes in Faculties using ODL as a mode of delivery requires to have the following essential functions, namely an operation plan for the academic year, advertisement and enrollment of students to the study programmes, schedule of academic activities, provision of academic and other support to students and schedule of assessments and award to successful candidates. Faculty will implement, and monitor such functions with the cooperation from other constituents of the university. Faculty offering the study programme requires an appropriate organizational structure, governance and management procedures; strategic/action plan and implementation; management capacity and procedures; by-laws relating to the programmes of study; duty lists and Codes of Conduct for staff and Charter for students curriculum development and internal quality assurance mechanism and procedures; curricula revision process, and adherence to national guidelines / reference points; teaching and learning and assessment procedures effectively implemented to distance learners.

Faculty maintains adherence to Outcome Based Education--Student Centred Learning approach in the education *provision; academic counseling, student counseling, welfare* mechanisms and procedures; national and international partnerships and national and international visibility; provisions for accommodating and assisting students with special needs; measures to promote gender equity and equality, by-laws to deter any sexual and gender-based harassment; and measures and strategies to adopt the policy of zero-tolerance to ragging.

The scope of this criterion is captured in the following 'Standards"

No	Standards	Example of Evidence	Score Guide
1.1	The Faculty offering programmes has a mission statement that is relevant to its operational context adhering to ODL mode of delivery and is supported by clearly defined goals and objectives.	Relevant publications to show Faculty Mission Statement, goals and objectives.	0. Inadequate 1.Barely Adequate 2. Adequate 3. Good **0 1 2 3** ○ ○ ○ ○
1.2	The Faculty organizational structure is adequate for	Organogram; Rules and Regulations TORs	**0 1 2 3**

No	Standards	Example of Evidence	Score Guide
	effective management and execution of its core functions with respect to programme management.	subcommittees & Ad-hoc Committees; minutes of the Faculty Board, faculty subcommittees & Ad-hoc Committees, faculty memos to show that the core functions of programme management are effectively executed.	○ ○ ○ ○
1.3	The Faculty Action Plan with respect to programmes of study are up to date and aligned with the University's/HEI's Strategic Plan and demonstrates readiness to adopt new trends in higher education and ODL.	Faculty Action Plan and Annual Plans to show that they align with University's / HEI's strategic plan, Faculty board minutes, Department notes / minutes, action plan monitoring Committee minutes; new proposals publications related to new initiatives promoted through the Action Plan to show implementation of continuing and new additions to programme management.	**0 1 2 3** ○ ○ ○ ○
1.4	The Faculty adopts management procedures that are in compliance with national and institutional Standard Operational Procedures (SOPs), and they are documented and widely	Documented Standard Operational Procedures (SoPs)/Management Procedures; Annual Internal Audit Report; Annual External Audit Report UGC E code; OUSL Examination	**0 1 2 3** ○ ○ ○ ○

No	Standards	Example of Evidence	Score Guide
	circulated.	manual	
1.5	The Faculty adopts a participatory approach in its governance and management and accommodates external academics / relevant stakeholders relevant field /s of study and student representation on faculty boards.	Minutes of Faculty Board/ Stakeholder consultations; follow-up action taken; list of committees with student participation; evidence of student participation in decision making process; stakeholder feedback.	**0 1 2 3** ○ ○ ○ ○
1.6	The Faculty have subcommittees / adhoc committees to coordinate implementation of all functions of programme management.	TORs and Minutes subcommittee / adhoc committees, records , publications, faculty memos to show the participatory approach in coordinating the implementation of the programme management within the faculty.	**0 1 2 3** ○ ○ ○ ○
1.7	The Faculty adheres to the annual academic calendar that enables the students to complete the programme and graduate at the stipulated time.	Evidence of Faculty mechanism in setting the timetable; past timetables and records of entry and graduation dates of batches of students over the past 5 years.	**0 1 2 3** ○ ○ ○ ○
1.8	The Faculty adheres to the pre- planned annual operational cycle for the programmes of study.	Annual operational schedule and supporting documents such as advertisements, print orders, registrations dates,	

No	Standards	Example of Evidence	Score Guide
		student registrations packs, Final examination time tables, documents related to release of results to show that the Faculty ensures adhering to preplanned operations cycle of the programme.	0 1 2 3 ○ ○ ○ ○
1.9	The Faculty hasmechanisms in place to ensure effective communication & coordinationamong different institutional constituencies to conduct academic activities of the programme of study.	Faculty academic board records, interaction with staff, procedures for nomination and appointment to committees, committee meeting minutes, evidence of consequential actions, interaction with staff to show Faculty representations on all standing committees of the Senate ,whose functions are programme approval, course development, course delivery.	0 1 2 3 ○ ○ ○ ○
1.10	The Faculty makes available a Handbook to all prospective students	Faculty Handbook; having descriptions of the study programme(s) offered, admission requirements, exemptions and prior learning requirements, academic and student support services with respect to ODL, fee structure & payment methods,	0 1 2 3 ○ ○ ○ ○

No	Standards	Example of Evidence	Score Guide
		scholarships and bursaries, welfare measures, the rights and responsibilities of students, and grievance redress.	
1.11	The Faculty makes available a Study Programme Prospectus to all incoming students enrolling in the programme of study	Study Programme Prospectus; having descriptions on Graduate attributes, Programme objectives, Curriculum and Course Curricula/Syllabi of courses; Examination by-laws. Lateral entry /exit point at different levels, optional courses and electives offered, examination procedures and grading mechanism, graduating requirements, examination by- laws, etc. the rights and responsibilities of students, and grievance redress mechanism.	0 1 2 3 ○ ○ ○ ○
1.12	The Faculty Website is up- to -date with current information and provides links to all publications such as handbooks/prospectus, special notices,	Faculty Website and links.	0 1 2 3 ○ ○ ○ ○

No	Standards	Example of Evidence	Score Guide
	announcements, etc.		
1.13	Faculty offers an induction/orientation programme for all new students to facilitate students' transition from 'school' to 'university' environment and transition from face to face to ODL environment.	Institutional mechanism of conducting induction / orientation programme in all centers of course delivery; outline of the contents of the orientation programme; feedback received from participants & resource persons, remedial measures made for improvement.	**0 1 2 3** ○ ○ ○ ○
1.14	The Faculty securely maintains, updates and ensures confidentiality of permanent records of all students, accessible only to authorized personnel with provision for secure backups of all files.	Description of data collation and handling procedures, Mechanisms of providing access & their review.	**0 1 2 3** ○ ○ ○ ○
1.15	The Faculty uses an ICT platform and applications for all its key functions and maintains an updated data base which is linked to the university Management Information System (MIS).	Inventory of ICT facilities; Evidence of adoption of ICT-based tools in management such as MIS; evidence of adoption of ICT tools for teaching and learning; evidence of installation and operation of LMS.	**0 1 2 3** ○ ○ ○ ○
1.16	The Faculty issues a copy of the Code of Conduct/ Student Charter prescribed by the University to each	Documentary evidence of existence of Student Code of Conduct/Student Charter and modes of communication and	**0 1 2 3** ○ ○ ○ ○

No	Standards	Example of Evidence	Score Guide
	and every incoming student; it is communicated to all students and students' adherence to the prescribed code of conduct is closely monitored and promoted.	checking forcompliance, evidence of their issue to students enrolled in the programme.	
1.17	The Faculty implements duty lists, work norms and Codes of Conduct for all categories of staff, communicates those to all and monitors regularly.	Work Norms and duty lists; Codes of Conduct of different categories of staff, evidence of monitoring documents for both academic, academic support, administrative and non academic staff evidence on implementation plans.	0 1 2 3 ○ ○ ○ ○
1.18	The Faculty implements the performance appraisal system prescribed by the University/HEI; performance of staff is enhanced through training and rewarding high performers.	Guidelines and formats of Performance Appraisal System; sample of Annual Appraisal Reports; CPD programmes planned & conducted and follow up action taken; reward scheme that is in place and names of recipients over the past 3 years.	0 1 2 3 ○ ○ ○ ○
1.19	The Faculty has established an Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) with well- defined functions and operational procedures; it works in liaison with the Internal Quality Assurance Unit (IQAU) of the	Documentary and physical evidence as regard to existence of IQAC; by-laws and operational procedures manual; minutes of the IQAC and IQAU meetings; evidence of implementing internal quality enhancement	0 1 2 3 ○ ○ ○ ○

No	Standards	Example of Evidence	Score Guide
	University/HEI and implements internal quality enhancement system.	system; reports of implementation of the recommendations of EQAs previously concluded.	
1.21	The Faculty adopts a clear policy and procedure on programme approval and implementation and programme discontinuation to ensure that students enrolled into the programme will complete their education without any disruption	Evidence of mechanism adopted in implementing new curricula and in discontinuation of an on-going programme.	0 1 2 3 ◯ ◯ ◯ ◯
1.22	The Faculty monitors the implementation of the curriculum and the quality of education provision through multiple measures, the findings of which are used for continuous improvement of learning provision.	Evidence of monitoring measures - student- feedback, peer observation, graduate satisfaction surveys at exit points, employability studies, and employer feedback surveys; evidence of the use of feedback reports and surveys in affecting the continuous improvement of curriculum, teaching and learning and assessment methods.	0 1 2 3 ◯ ◯ ◯ ◯
1.23	The Faculty has established collaborative partnerships with national and foreign universities/HEIs/	Documentary evidence of nationally and internationally funded research projects; copies of MOUs/Agreements	0 1 2 3 ◯ ◯ ◯ ◯

No	Standards	Example of Evidence	Score Guide
	organizations for academic and research cooperation.	reached; evidence of implementation/ outcome of the collaboration specified in MoUs.	
1.24	The Faculty operates academic mentoring, student counselling and welfare mechanisms and procedures and ensures that the personnel responsible for the tasks are adequately trained to fulfill their roles.	Faculty mechanism of student and academic/ mentoring, counselling system and welfare mechanism; TORs for academic mentors, and student counsellors; description of welfare mechanism and regular activities undertaken; list of training programmes offered to staff undertaking mentoring/ counselling work, feedback reports from trainees.	**0 1 2 3** ○ ○ ○ ○
1.25	The Faculty assures that all its students have access to health care services, cultural and aesthetic activities; recreational and sports facilities ?	Documentary evidence for healthcare, sports and recreational facilities; evidence of students' engagement in leisure, sports and cultural activities	**0 1 2 3** ○ ○ ○ ○
1.26	The Faculty implements measures to ensure the safety and security of students and staff.	Documentary evidence of safety and security measures that are in operation within the Faculty - Policies on CCTV.	**0 1 2 3** ○ ○ ○ ○
1.27	The Faculty adopts and practices University/ HEI approved by-laws pertaining	Documentary evidence of existence and adoption of by-laws for examinations,	

No	Standards	Example of Evidence	Score Guide
	to examinations, examination offences, student discipline, and student unions; the adopted by- laws are made widely available to both staff and students.	student discipline and student unions.	0 1 2 3 ○ ○ ○ ○
1.28	The Faculty offers special support and assistance for students with special needs or differently-abled students.	Documentary evidence of policy, and strategy and activities aimed at students with special needs/differently abled students.	0 1 2 3 ○ ○ ○ ○
1.29	The Faculty practices the policy of zero-tolerance to ragging; it adopts strategies and implement preventive and deterrent measures through coordinated efforts of all stakeholders to prevent ragging and any other form of harassment and intimidation.	Documentary evidence of policy and strategy of anti-ragging/harassment; Student Disciplinary by-laws; report on the past activities geared to prevent ragging and punishments meted out.	0 1 2 3 ○ ○ ○ ○
1.31	The academic staff possess appropriate qualifications, skills and expertise for their positions, including those related to Open and distance Learning (ODL).	MIS ?, recruitment, retention and promotion criteria policy documents Management committee records, annual report, leadership and reporting responsibilities. Training	0 1 2 3 ○ ○ ○ ○

No	Standards	Example of Evidence	Score Guide
		schedules on ODL methodology, percentage trained over the last 3 years.	
1.32	The Faculty have adequate visiting academic staff with appropriate qualifications, recruited, trained in disciplines of the programme of study and ODL methodologies to provide academic support to students at all centers of programme delivery.	Documents related recruitment, appointment, TORs, distribution, training, monitoring of attendance performance at all centers, payment records where the programe is delivered.	0 1 2 3 ○ ○ ○ ○
1.33	The administrative staff possess appropriate qualifications and experience for their positions and roles.	MIS ?, recruitment, retention and promotion criteria policy documents Management committee records, annual report, leadership and reporting responsibilities, policy documents of the Chief Executive Officer and senior management, efficiency of reporting consequential action.	0 1 2 3 ○ ○ ○ ○
1.34	There are clear lines of responsibility and accountability within the Faculty and the roles of staff are clearly spelt out.	Human resource development document, documented internal delegations and service statements, staff roles and responsibilities	0 1 2 3 ○ ○ ○ ○

No	Standards	Example of Evidence	Score Guide
		documentation, codes of obligations and rights, documentation of performance review systems, work norms, job description and organizational charts.	
1.35	Appropriate training provided to staff of the Faculty on the use and maintenance of new technology, equipment, facilities, and communication and information systems available/deployed in the Institution.	Corporate/Strategic Plan; staff development centre/unit plans, training schedules, training manuals, feedback on training programmes, training budget, interaction with staff. Budget allocations, staff development centre/unit/committee meeting minutes.	**0 1 2 3** ○ ○ ○ ○
1.36	The Faculty adheres to clear transparent financial procedures in implementing all its activities.	Financial allocation, Corporate/Strategic Plan, annual reports, audit reports. Internal audit reports, auditor general's reports, annual reports, audit procedures, audit committee structure, roles and responsibilities and minutes of meetings.	**0 1 2 3** ○ ○ ○ ○
1.37	Provision is made in the Faculty annual budget to promote and enable constructive experimentation in the design of courses and	Records of Facultys' annual budget allocation requests, annual budget allocations, disbursement of funds and expenditure on the budget line items documentary	**0 1 2 3** ○ ○ ○ ○

No	Standards	Example of Evidence	Score Guide
	delivery methods, institutional & disciplinary research.	evidence on improvement made and research activities over the past 5 years.	
1.38	There is provision for financial assistance for needy learners.	Corporate/Strategic Plan, Prospectus, information package to students; website, bursary committee procedures, minutes of meetings, interaction with students; financial statements of disbursement of bursaries/stipends.	0 1 2 3 ○ ○ ○ ○
1.39	There are effective channels for communication with potential, current and past students, with key external organizations, and with all staff and tutors involved in the learning-teaching process.	Management Information System, websites, interaction with stakeholders and documented feedback mechanisms and plans; evidence of systems which achieve integration of feedback data from all stakeholders; surveys of stakeholder awareness and opinions; e-mail and discussion forums, interaction with stakeholders. Management Information System, websites, interaction between staff, e-mail service and access.	0 1 2 3 ○ ○ ○ ○

No	Standards	Example of Evidence	Score Guide
1.40	The Facultys provide prompt response to the learners' needs for academic, administrative and personal support where relevant and complaints are dealt with quickly, fairly andefficiently.	By-laws for grievance redress mechanisms;minutes of Grievance Committee meetings, Complaints received and actions taken;Council's minutes;Committee structure for Senior Management to meet student unions ;Minutes of meetins indicating follow up actions	0 1 2 3 ○ ○ ○ ○

Criterion 2 - Programme Design and Development

Scope -Programme of study is defined as a stand-alone approved curriculum followed by a student, which contributes to a qualification of a degree awarding body. Where a programme is made up of more than one self-contained, formally structured units, those are referred to as courses/modules

Programmes of study should reflect university's mission, goals and objectives. They are offered according to needs analysis based on an audit of existing courses and programmes, market research, liaison with industry, national and regional priorities and according to approved procedures. Subject Benchmark Statements (SBS) and requirements of professional bodies act as valuable guide /external reference points when formulating a structure and content of a new degree programme. Curriculum is outcome driven and equips students with knowledge, skills and attitudes to succeed in the world of work and for lifelong learning.

Programme design is initiated by describing the graduate outcomes of the programme followed by a clear mapping of course/module outcomes to the programme outcomes. Learning outcomes are developed and described with reference to a particular level of study based on (in compliance with) the Sri Lanka Qualification Framework (SLQF) .All programme outcomes should be clearly aligned with course outcomes , content, teaching learning and assessment strategies (constructive alignment). Programmes should seek to engage students in a variety of learning activities that would that would encourage diversity, flexibility, accessibility and autonomy of learning, and produce compatibility between curriculum, student centred teaching methods assessment procedures. Essentially the final curriculum is an interaction between learning outcomes , methods of assessment , teaching methods and content.

Good practice is to consider not only the curriculum areas of study but also the intellectual, practical, and transferable skills that should be developed and assessed at each level using the level descriptors in the SLQF to establish a standard for each level of study .There should be an effective process for regular monitoring and review

The scope of this Criterion is captured in the following 'Standards'.

No.	Standards	Examples of Evidence	Score Guide
2.1	The academic programme reflects the mission, goals and objectives of the Faculty and are appropriate to higher education.	Strategic Management Plan; programme design and development plans, evidence provided through interaction with students and staff, minutes/ notes of programme development committees/ teams .	0. Inadequate 1.Barely Adequate 2. Adequate 3. Good **0 1 2 3** ○ ○ ○ ○

No.	Standards	Examples of Evidence	Score Guide
2.2	Programme offer a mix of core and elective courses to allow greater flexibility to develop a range of skills to achieve ILOs.	Prospectus; Handbook; programme information package; website, Planning documents which address the requirements of Accreditation agencies/professionals.	0 1 2 3 ○ ○ ○ ○
2.3	Access to programme is as open as possible with flexible entry and exit points where applicable.	Curriculum and programme development and accreditation policies, credit exemption and transfer policies.	0 1 2 3 ○ ○ ○ ○
2.4	The Faculty adhere to institutional policies, rules, regulations and processes for the design, development, approval, monitoring and review of the academic programmes and awards.	Minutes of the academic advisory committee, faculty board, Curriculum and course development, by laws, Senate, council and UGC and accreditation policies; faculty prospectus, institution's teaching and learning plan, student feedback, employer feed back.	0 1 2 3 ○ ○ ○ ○
2.5	The policies, rules, regulations and processes for the design, development, approval, monitoring and review of academic programmes and awards are widely communicated to all stakeholders and implementation is ensured.	Minutes of academic boards and academic review process; evidence provided through interaction with students and staff.	0 1 2 3 ○ ○ ○ ○
2.6	The Faculty has made available to its learners clearly stated transfer-of-credit/exemptions policies in	Prospectus, website, By Laws, learning and teaching plans, academic review processes, credit transfer/exemption committee minutes, employer and	0 1 2 3 ○ ○ ○ ○

No.	Standards	Examples of Evidence	Score Guide
	order to facilitate the mobility of learners and recognize prior learning and experience.	stakeholder surveys.	
2.7	Programmes are designed based on systematic need analysis to determine the learner needs and viability of the programme.	Need analysis reports; employer surveys, student satisfaction surveys, institutional learning and teaching plan, curriculum and course development and accreditation policies, availability of appropriate curriculum and learning support needs of the target group.	**0 1 2 3** ○ ○ ○ ○
2.8	Programme design and development pay attention, as far as possible, to gender equity, multiculturalism, social justice and cohesion, ethical values and environmental sustainability.	Corporate/Strategic Plan; programme objectives, programme/ course materials, handbook, academic information package, need analysis reports; employer surveys, institution learning and teaching plans, curriculum and course development and accreditation policies.	**0 1 2 3** ○ ○ ○ ○
2.9	The Faculty ensures stakeholder participation at all key stages of programme planning, design, development, monitoring and review.	Stakeholder meetings and documentation; review reports; feedback reports, reports on need analysis; Minutes of development/advisory committee, Minutes of Programme / Course development Committees.	**0 1 2 3** ○ ○ ○ ○
2.10	Programme design and development are carried out through a programme development team which	Minutes of Programme / Course development Committees, Course team documentation; Appointment letters.	**0 1 2 3** ○ ○ ○ ○

No.	Standards	Examples of Evidence	Score Guide
	includes expertise from within and outside the institution.		
2.11	Programmes comply with SLQF and are guided by other reference points such as Subject Benchmark Statements (SBS), and requirements of professional/ statutory bodies.	Policy and procedures on Curriculum and course design; evidence of compliance with SLQF, SBSs and Professional body requirements; programme evaluation instruments, needs analysis reports.	**0 1 2 3** ○ ○ ○ ○
2.12	The Faculty ensures that appropriate learning outcomes are clearly identified in the programme for work – based placement/ industrial training / internship and for students and the external organisations of their specific responsibilities.	Programme approval documents, Course profiles, terms of reference of external organisation, student feedback & feedback from external training organizations.	**0 1 2 3** ○ ○ ○ ○
2.13	The programme curriculum encourages development of knowledge, skills and attitudes.	Handbook; Prospectus; curriculum of individual programmes; SLQF mapping document.	**0 1 2 3** ○ ○ ○ ○

No.	Standards	Examples of Evidence	Score Guide
2.14	For each academic programme there is a comprehensive blueprint of the Programme.(Programme Specification), which adopts an Outcome Based Education (OBE) where programme outcomes are clearly aligned with the course/module outcomes; and the teaching and learning activities and assessment strategy are aligned with the learning outcomes of each course (constructive alignment).	Curriculum development committee meeting minutes/Senate approved programme documents; Programme specifications/ course specifications specifying programme objectives and course outlines, Learning Outcomes (LO) teaching learning strategy assessment methods, Credits to be earned, workload defined by notional hours, entry and exit pathways including fall back options.	0 1 2 3 ○ ○ ○ ○
2.15	The blueprint of the Programme (Programme specification) is communicated to prospective students, learners, staff and public, through print and electronic media.	Prospectus, Handbook, programme information package, website, student comments through questionnaire, evidence provided through interaction with students and staff.	0 1 2 3 ○ ○ ○ ○
2.16	The Faculty periodically reviews and revises the academic programmes (5-year cycle) with relevant stakeholders for continuing validity, in relation to external Quality Assurance (EQA) frameworks.	Internal/external review reports; EQA reports, reports from professional bodies; accreditation reports; feedback from stakeholders; remedial measures taken.	0 1 2 3 ○ ○ ○ ○

No.	Standards	Examples of Evidence	Score Guide
2.17	The programme evaluation process is an on-going process of the Faculty, informed by current research and needs and incorporated to the planning process of the course design and development.	Faculty teaching and learning plan, curriculum and course development and accreditation policies, academic boards and academic review process; Performance indicators such as graduation rates, employment rates, career progression rates, admission to further study rates, etc are used to evaluate performance of academic programmes.	**0 1 2 3** ○ ○ ○ ○
2.18	The Faculty regularly collects and records information from prospective learners, learners, graduates, employers and other relevant stakeholders and thereafter use these for the planning and improvement of the programme.	Adoption of policy and procedures in curriculum design and improvement of programmes; means of tapping student and staff opinion, data from test audits of student administration, surveys of student opinions of student services, documents reporting the efficiency of student services, programme/ course experience questionnaire data; improvements made on the results; Tracer studies.	**0 1 2 3** ○ ○ ○ ○
2.19	Learner satisfaction of the programmes is regularly evaluated.	Corporate/Strategic Plan; Course evaluation studies; satisfaction surveys & analysis, evidence of dovetailing feedback	**0 1 2 3** ○ ○ ○ ○
2.20	When academic programmes are discontinued /suspended, or programme requirements are significantly changed, the Faculty implements	Policy and procedures for phasing out, Minutes of academic boards, Senate and Council minutes, correspondence with students.	**0 1 2 3** ○ ○ ○ ○

No.	Standards	Examples of Evidence	Score Guide
	appropriate arrangements to ensure enrolled students complete their education with minimum disruption and phasing out plans are communicated to relevant students in advance.		
2.21	Programme design and development procedures include specific details relating to entry and exit pathways including fallback options; Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs); qualification levels criteria, and qualification type descriptors; teaching, learning and assessment processes to enable achievement of ILOs that are congruent with the programme mission and goals; alignment with external reference points such as SLQF and SBS.	Faculty policy documents on programme design and development; programme/ course specification template approved by the faculty; curriculum development committee meeting minutes indicating the adoption of the procedures.	0 1 2 3 ○ ○ ○ ○
2.22	The Faculty uses graduate profile as the foundation for developing learning outcomes at the levels of programme, course/modules.	Faculty Handbook/Prospectus with graduate profile; programme/course specifications reflecting constructive alignment.	0 1 2 3 ○ ○ ○ ○
2.23	The academic standards of the programme with respect to its	Evidence of use of SLQF and /or SBS in determination of awards and	0 1 2 3 ○ ○ ○ ○

No.	Standards	Examples of Evidence	Score Guide
	awards and qualifications are appropriate to the level and nature of the award and are aligned with the SLQF and where available SBS.	qualifications.	
2.24	Programme design and development integrates appropriate learning strategies for the development of self-directed learning, collaborative learning, creative and critical thinking, life-long learning, interpersonal communication and teamwork into the courses.	Faculty Programme design policy and procedures; minutes of programme development committee; programme/course specifications; student feedback; programme evaluation reports over 3 years.	**0 1 2 3** ○ ○ ○ ○

Criterion 3 -Course Design and Development

Courses are components of a programme of study offered in consistence with the programme objectives to culminate in student attainment of intended learning outcomes of the respective courses. Courses are designed according to approved policies and procedures of the Senate. Course curriculum is an interaction between aims and objectives, learning outcomes, content, teaching methods and methods of assessment. Course design also takes into account the needs of differently abled students. Course credits conform to the guidelines prescribed in the SLQF. The Faculty strife to improve courses to enhance achievement of learning outcomes and achievement of standards through monitoring and feedback process.

Teaching and learning process are student centred in keeping with outcome-based education. Choice of different teaching methods may even be of greater significance to what students learn than the content that is being taught. Faculty should match students' needs with multiple learning opportunities using teaching techniques to engage students actively in the learning process .This would ensure that students are successfully equipped with the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values required after they exit. The teaching learning, assessments and learning outcomes are closely aligned so that they reinforce one another..

The scope of this criterion is captured in the following 'Standards'.

No.	Standards	Examples of Evidence	Score Guide
3.1	Course design pays attention to national and international trends.	Course materials, minutes of the course planning and course design committees, evidence provided through interaction with students, staff, professional accrediting bodies, governments, and employers.	0. Inadequate 1. Barely Adequate 2. Adequate 3. Good **0 1 2 3** ○ ○ ○ ○
3.2	The Faculty has approved policies, rules, regulations and processes for the design,	Curriculum development documents with programme evaluation policies and procedures. Organizational	**0 1 2 3** ○ ○ ○ ○

No.	Standards	Examples of Evidence	Score Guide
	development, approval, monitoring and review of courses.	arrangements for curriculum development and approval; TOR and guidelines for Senate and Faculty level curriculum development committees.	
3.3	Policies, rules, regulations and processes for the design, development, approval, monitoring and review of courses are widely communicated to all stakeholders involved in course development and implementation is ensured.	Course materials; Evidence provided through interaction with staff; intranet.	0 1 2 3 ○ ○ ○ ○
3.4	The courses are designed to meet the stated programme objectives and programme learning outcomes and reflect knowledge and current developments in the relevant subject areas.	Course curriculum, Course profiles, mapping of course objectives with programme objectives and SLQF and other professional frameworks alignment with SBS.	0 1 2 3 ○ ○ ○ ○
3.5	The course curriculum encourages development of creative and critical thinking, independent and life-long learning and interpersonal communication and team work skills.	Course curriculum, course profiles, course contents, schedules of academic activities, student reports, assignments, observations of group work, feedback from students.	0 1 2 3 ○ ○ ○ ○
3.6	Each course is designed in a manner that contents, learning activities and assessment methods are	Course curriculum, course profiles, course material, schedules of academic activities, student reports, assignments, assessment methods,	0 1 2 3 ○ ○ ○ ○

No.	Standards	Examples of Evidence	Score Guide
	systematically aligned with the course learning outcomes which in turn are aligned with the programme learning outcomes (constructive alignment).	marking schemes, feedback from students, peer review reports; external examiners' reports.	
3.7	Courses maintain an appropriates balance with respect to notional hours, among didactic, laboratory, outside work (field work, experimental/ practical work) independent learning as applicable within the course specified in course profile. (course specification)	Course profiles. (course specification) Prospectus.	**0 1 2 3** ○ ○ ○ ○
3.8	Courses are designed and developed by a course team with the involvement of internal and external subject experts together with other relevant experts with each member being aware of his/her respective roles and responsibilities.	Course materials, information package, minutes of the course planning and course design committees as evidence to show that the courses are developed through course teams including relevant experts in the subject areas, in instructional design and in course delivery and to indicate that the course development was based on a plan that details the processes, timelines, finance, infrastructural requirements and resources.	**0 1 2 3** ○ ○ ○ ○

No.	Standards	Examples of Evidence	Score Guide
3.9	Mechanisms are established to encourage linkages with national and international agencies for course design and development.	Policy documents, MOUs, minutes of course development committees, Minutes of meetings with external experts; evidence provided through interaction with students and staff.	0 1 2 3 ○ ○ ○ ○
3.10	Mechanisms for course adoption and adaptation are established to encourage recent advances and trends for course design and development.	Policy documents on course design models/methods, use of OER, course material.	0 1 2 3 ○ ○ ○ ○
3.11	The courses are designed in compliance with SLQF and is guided by other reference points such as SBS where available, and requirements of professional/ statutory/ regulatory bodies.	Policy and procedures on curriculum and course design; evidence of compliance with SLQF, SBSs; Course specification (course synopsis) document reflecting mapping of ILOs with graduate attributes Planning documents which address the requirements of Accreditation agencies/professional s if any.	0 1 2 3 ○ ○ ○ ○

No.	Standards	Examples of Evidence	Score Guide
3.12	Course design and development has integrated learner-centred teaching strategies and appropriate media enabling students to be actively engaged in their own learning guided by tutors/ facilitators.	Course development plan, course materials, online courses, audio visual material, information package, assessment and evaluation schemes, assignments and question papers to show that the Learning activities are designed to contribute to the development of the specified generic skills; that the integration of student centred strategies such as teaching methods, learner activities, use of appropriate ICTs in the course design process.	0 1 2 3 ○ ○ ○ ○
3.13	Instructional design recognizes diversity of learners, learning contexts, learning styles, and learning needs, and integrates appropriate learner support into it.	Course materials, Course development plan, information package, research studies to show the incorporation of variety of activities that accommodate different learning styles in the course materials and use of appropriate adaptive technology to address the needs of the differently-abled learners; evidence provided through interaction with students, staff and course developers.	0 1 2 3 ○ ○ ○ ○
3.14	Each course has a clear 'Course profile' that provides the credit value of the course, workload and notional hours as per SLQF,	Instructional package, course specification (course synopsis/ profile), Minutes of relevant committees, course information sheets- as evidence to show that the instructional package is	0 1 2 3 ○ ○ ○ ○

No.	Standards	Examples of Evidence	Score Guide
	course LOs, content outline, teaching learning strategy, assessment strategy, appropriate learner support and learning resources.	comprehensive and contains a learner friendly description of the syllabus, course plans, learning outcomes, credit hours, teaching/ learning and assessment/ evaluation details and strategies (e.g. face-to-face, self-learning, assignments, assessments, laboratory studies, field studies, clinical work, industrial training etc.)	
3.15	Course profiles are communicated to relevant learners and staff, and are publicly available in print and digital formats.	Programme brochures/guides, course information sheets, website, minutes of relevant committees, etc.	0 1 2 3 ○ ○ ○ ○
3.16	Faculty use approved standard formats/ templates for course/module design and development are complied with during the design and development phases.	Course templates, course materials, QA checklist for each course, Minutes for the course planning and course design committees, evidence provided through interaction with staff, students and course developers, training materials and feedback data as evidence to show the adherence of formalities and templates to courses.	0 1 2 3 ○ ○ ○ ○
3.17	Appropriate and adequate resources are available and accessible for the faculty for effective course design and development.	Training manuals, templates, guidelines, LMS, document management system, physical resources, human resources.	0 1 2 3 ○ ○ ○ ○
3.18	There are clear mechanisms to obtain copyright	Mechanisms approved by academic boards for copyright clearance;	0 1 2 3

No.	Standards	Examples of Evidence	Score Guide
	clearances where necessary.	number of copyrights agreements, guidelines and mechanisms.	○ ○ ○ ○
3.19	Appropriate procedures are in place to ensure the quality of the course design and development process at the following stages; during development, mid-life and at the end of course delivery.	Course policy documents, approval records, Approval processes, Internal monitoring tools/forms, Pilot tested material, end of course evaluations, midlife evaluations, forms.	**0 1 2 3** ○ ○ ○ ○
3.20	Faculty ensures that appropriate and adequate personnel, resources and procedures are in place to ensure the timely production and distribution of course materials to learners.	Quality Assurance Framework; Course Development plans; Operation schedules, Training schedules for staff.	**0 1 2 3** ○ ○ ○ ○
3.21	Staff involved in instructional design and development, has been trained for such purposes and are being regularly upgraded.	Recruitment policy, procedures, training plan to show the institution has a mechanism to ensure the relevant competence of the content developers, technical and support staff and others involved in course design, development and production.	**0 1 2 3** ○ ○ ○ ○
3.22	The staff is provided with required training in outcome-based education & student-centered learning approach (OBE-SCL) and the staff is provided with teaching &	Inspection of facilities, observation of teaching sessions; stakeholder feedback, and evidence for staff training programmes/sessions/workshops; e.g. workshop attendance sheets, training	**0 1 2 3** ○ ○ ○ ○

No.	Standards	Examples of Evidence	Score Guide
	training facilities to implement OBE-SCL.	material, workshop participant feedback, training agenda with training objectives and names of resource persons.	
3.24	Teachers engage students in self-directed learning, collaborative learning, relevant contexts, use of technology as an instructional aid while being flexible with regard to individual needs and differences.	Course specifications; course development committee minutes; student feedback; course evaluation reports.	0 1 2 3 ○ ○ ○ ○
3.25	Teachers adopt both teacher directed and student-centred teaching-learning methodologies as specified in the course specifications.	Course specifications; course development committee minutes; direct teaching practice observation reports; student feedback.	0 1 2 3 ○ ○ ○ ○

Criterion 4 - learning infrastructure and resources and learner support

Scope-Learner support services address the identified needs of students and enhance a supportive learning environment aimed at student success in higher education.The learney journey from pre-entry to alumnus is characterized by a concern for student access , learning,progress, and success in achieving the programme outcomes.- Faculty provide adequate and appropriate infrastructure facilities to conduct quality academic programmesacademic support and related support for learners, technological innovations in educational transactions for enrichingthe learning experiences of learners, and manages the institution in a technology enabled way for effective delivery ofprogram/ courses through distance education.Student support services are systematically assessed using student learning outcomes The institution regularly and systematically evaluates the quality of learner support services using feedback fromlearners, faculty and staff, assuring their adequacy in meeting learners' needs and uses the assessment data tocontinuously improve learner support programmes and services.

The scope of this Criterion is captured in the following 'Standards'.

No.	Standards	Examples of Evidence	Score Guide
4.1	The learners are provided with adequate resources and appropriate services to support learning built into the programme/course ensuring equity in access.	Course Materials and additional resources such as videos etc. visits to physical facilities and library; MIS, evidence provided through interaction with staff and students as evidence for providing Contact sessions, Laboratory/field professional practice sessions, Online learning, multimedia, support for learners with special needs, support for self-study, etc.	0. Inadequate 1. Barely Adequate 2. Adequate 3. Good **0 1 2 3** ○ ○ ○ ○

No.	Standards	Examples of Evidence	Score Guide
4.2	Adequate physical and technological infrastructure is available at centers to conduct of the programme.	Visits planned to observe physical and technological facilities, evidence provided through interaction with staff and students, information package, student handbook; Learner satisfaction surveys evaluation studies.	**0 1 2 3** ○ ○ ○ ○
4.3	Staff are aware of their responsibilities for provision of support to learners in the programme of study.	Documents related to informing staff about academic support, technical support, administrative support, etc., that needs to be provided for learners on the programme of study. Visiting academic training schedules, minutes of the faculty board, RES board meetings, feedback from academic staff and all support staff.	**0 1 2 3** ○ ○ ○ ○
4.4	Academic staff are accessible to the learners through a range of services.	Prospectus, handbooks, instruction sheets, website emails, SMS, LMS, MYOUSL as evidence to show that staff communicate with students with respect to academic activities.	**0 1 2 3** ○ ○ ○ ○

No.	Standards	Examples of Evidence	Score Guide
4.5	Administrative staff are accessible to the learner through a range of services.	Documents on websites online help desk, emails, MYOUSL, SMS, official communication as evidence to show that staff communicate with student during the academic year, evidence at meetings with students.	0 1 2 3 ○ ○ ○ ○
4.6	Programme has provided learners the choice of using a wide range of technologies for learning to achieve the desired learning outcomes.	Course materials as a package with different formats - such as print, online, multimedia, video conferencing, etc.	0 1 2 3 ○ ○ ○ ○
4.7	Programme utilizes appropriate methods to orient the student towards self-study and to provide sufficient assistance to serve the needs.	Brochures, prospectus, website; documentation on programmes/ workshops/ orientation sessions, meetings providing assistance with outcomes, student feedback surveys.	0 1 2 3 ○ ○ ○ ○
4.8	Programme has ensured that the **tutor (teacher)**? : learner ratio is optimal to enable the tutors to provide adequate support in educational activities of all courses of the programme.	Student handbook, information package, evidence provided through interaction with management, attendance sheets of contact sessions, online transcripts of online courses, appointment letters of visiting staff student / stakeholder feedback surveys.	0 1 2 3 ○ ○ ○ ○

No.	Standards	Examples of Evidence	Score Guide
4.9	Appropriate training is provided for all relevant staff, to enable them to provide effective individual counseling and academic support for learners in the programme of study.	Evidence obtained through interaction with management, staff training records, records of orientation sessions, Staff development programmes.	**0 1 2 3** ○ ○ ○ ○
4.10	Mechanisms exist to regularly monitor and evaluate the quality adequacy, and accessibility of physical and technological resources, including facilities and equipment, including those of outreach Centers and appropriate remedial measures taken when needed.	Monitoring plan, surveys on accessibility of resources, recommendation reports, remedial action plans, procurement plan, cadre requests with respect to the programme of study.	**0 1 2 3** ○ ○ ○ ○
4.11	The Faculty ensures staff and learners in the programme of study have sufficient and appropriate library facilities, services and accessibility for effective teaching and learning.	Learner satisfaction feedback on library, Observational studies, number of user oriented services, number of physical resources and e-resource gateways available, interactive websites and presence of social media, annual budget allocation for library facilities, utilization of allocated funds, faculty programme links with library resources.	**0 1 2 3** ○ ○ ○ ○

No.	Standards	Examples of Evidence	Score Guide
4.12	The Faculty ensures staff and learners have sufficient and appropriate facilities for laboratory classes / clinical placements/ teaching practice placements/ field studies for effective teaching and learning.	Learner satisfaction surveys on facilities provided, teacher satisfaction surveys, visits to contact sessions, annual budget allocation/ utilization for upgrading/strengthening physical facilities at all centers, agreements, terms of references, training schedules where facilities other than OUSL facilities are used.	**0 1 2 3** ○ ○ ○ ○
4.13	The Faculty ensures staff and learners have sufficient and appropriate computer facilities for effective teaching and learning.	Learner satisfaction surveys on computer facilities, teacher satisfaction, Observational studies, evidence of expansion of computer facilities, and evidence of purchase of new computer, strengthening computer labs in centers.	**0 1 2 3** ○ ○ ○ ○
4.14	The Faculty ensures there is adequate and appropriate technology systems and infrastructure for learner support services are available to effectively conduct the programnme of study.	Handbook, information package; evidence of availability of Wifi zones, video conferencing facilities, reading rooms, SMS service, LMS, etc.	**0 1 2 3** ○ ○ ○ ○

No.	Standards	Examples of Evidence	Score Guide
4.15	The Faculty provides current and accurate information in an accessible manner through a variety of modes to all registered students of the programme.	Web, information sheet, MYOUSL, SMS as evidence to show that the information is accessible to learners on enrollment procedures, academic programmes and courses, learning outcomes of programmes and courses; programme and course completion requirements, Rules, Regulations and By-Laws for conduct, rights and responsibilities, tuition fees, other dues, payment methods, refund policies, opportunities and requirements for financial aid academic calendar.	**0 1 2 3** ○ ○ ○ ○
4.16	The Faculty encourages the student unions / associations to contribute to support student learning.	Student staff meeting minutes, Faculty board reports on student requests, Constitutions of Associations in place, Activities of such associations.	**0 1 2 3** ○ ○ ○ ○
4.17	Programme provides co-curricular and extracurricular activities to contribute to the social and cultural dimensions of the educational experience of learners.	Schedule of co-curricular activities, Minutes of meetings as evidence to show the conduct of co-curricular activities for sports and aesthetic programmes, established societies, budget allocation, sponsorships, estimates, etc.	**0 1 2 3** ○ ○ ○ ○

No.	Standards	Examples of Evidence	Score Guide
4.18	The Faculty provide opportunities for peer interaction to empower learners to share knowledge and information and develop interactive and collaborative learning skills.	Student handbook, information package, minutes of the course coordinators' meetings, feedback, year planner, schedules, course materials, evidence provided through interaction with staff, students and management, facilities available for peer interaction.	**0 1 2 3** ○ ○ ○ ○
4.19	Annual monitoring and evaluation of learner support services are implemented and outcomes are communicated to all relevant stakeholders.	Monitoring/review reports on facilities provided at teaching and learning centers, recommendation reports, Action plans based on recommendations.	**0 1 2 3** ○ ○ ○ ○
4.20	The Faculty regularly monitors learner retention, progression, completion and graduation rates, in the context of learner support services and takes remedial measures deemed necessary.	Student admission, progression dropouts and graduation data, student satisfaction surveys, programme evaluation, employment studies, tracer studies, annual reports; support programs introduced, course revisions.	**0 1 2 3** ○ ○ ○ ○

Criterion 5 - Learner Assessment And Evaluation

Scope -Assessment is an essential feature of the teaching and learning process, is properly managed, and reflects institutional national and international standards. The Faculty publishes its academic grading policy and applies it with fairness and consistency. Evaluation is based on the stated programme objectives. The assessment methods can be diagnostic, formative or summative. Student assessment approaches are documented for each course and programme offered, and assessments designed are valid, reliable and fair. The Faculty demonstrates successful learner achievement by maintaining acceptable course completion rates and graduation rates in comparison to similar ODL programmes elsewhere. The Faculty regularly reviews the effectiveness of the policies, processes, and By-Laws with respect to assessment of learning and amend accordingly.

The scope of this Criterion is captured in the following 'Standards'.

No.	Standards	Examples of Evidence	Score Guide
5.1	The Programme of study has By-laws, Rules and Regulations for assessment and evaluation of learners to ensure awards made meet the national and international academic standards.	By laws, Rules and Regulations; assessment strategies in line with SLQF guidelines; accreditations.	0. Inadequate 1. Barely Adequate 2. Adequate 3. Good **0 1 2 3** ○ ○ ○ ○

No.	Standards	Examples of Evidence	Score Guide
5.2	The Faculty adheres to Policies and procedures approved for the institution for designing, approving and monitoring assessment strategies for the programme and its courses are maintained.	By-laws, exams rules and regulations;faculty board/senate minutes. Curriculum development committee; curriculum; past question papers along with table of specification; Random samples of answer scripts; mark sheets; thesis and dissertations; undergraduate project reports; course assessment records.	**0 1 2 3** ○ ○ ○ ○
5.3	The Faculty ensure the security/ confidentiality and integrity of conducting the assessments.	Manual of examination procedures; Examination By-laws, student feedback; Evidence for securely administered summative assessments; procedures in place to ensure the security of identity and of personal information during assessment process; securely recorded results; arrangements are in place to ensure that the integrity of the certification processes is not compromised.	**0 1 2 3** ○ ○ ○ ○
5.4	Assessment strategy is aligned to the relevant level descriptors of the SLQF, the LOs and teaching learning strategies of programme/courses and clearly stated in the programme/course specifications.	Curricular of programmes/courses with availability of diagnostic, formative and summative assessment strategies; alignment of assessment to LO and teaching methods (Course Synopsis), Student feedback survey reports.	**0 1 2 3** ○ ○ ○ ○

No.	Standards	Examples of Evidence	Score Guide
5.5	Progression within and between courses is clearly explained and available.	Curricular of programmes/courses; Course Synopsis; Rules and Regulations of Programmes; Handbooks.	0 1 2 3 ○ ○ ○ ○
5.6	The programme includes formative assessments and summative assessments.	Rules and regulations, course materials, minutes of the course planning and course design committees, student handbook, course information package, continuous assessment / final examination schedules, marks / grade lists, evidence provided through interaction with management, students and staff.	0 1 2 3 ○ ○ ○ ○
5.7	Learners are informed about the different types of assessment and assessment techniques for the course.	Rules and regulations, course materials, student handbook, course information package, evidence provided through interaction with management, students and staff.	0 1 2 3 ○ ○ ○ ○
5.8	There are systems of tracking and recording to provide detailed and accurate feedback on their performance/progress in a timely manner.	OMIS, MYOUSL, evidence provided through interaction with administrators, students and staff; Students' feedback forms; Answer scripts of formative assessments; evidence of release of formative assessment results on time.	0 1 2 3 ○ ○ ○ ○

No.	Standards	Examples of Evidence	Score Guide
5.9	The Faculty ensure that assessment decisions are documented accurately and systematically, and that the decisions of relevant assessment panels and examination boards are communicated to learners without undue delay.	Documented records of all formal meetings related to assessments, procedures in place to maintain to confidentially and accuracy of such records, evidence of timely communication of results.	0 1 2 3 ○ ○ ○ ○
5.10	There is an appeal system to allow learners to query grades/marks awarded and the feedback provided.	Evidence for an appeal system; minutes of the grievance and disciplinary committees; student handbook; information package.	0 1 2 3 ○ ○ ○ ○
5.11	Code of Conduct of examinations and assessments /Manual of Examination is available and updated and communicated to all staff involved and enforced strictly.	Examination manual, documents; website; evidence for enforcement, workshops conducted for evaluators and supervisors.	0 1 2 3 ○ ○ ○ ○
5.12	The Faculty adhere to policies and regulations governing the selection/nomination and appointment of both internal and external examiners.	Policy documents on appointing of external examiners, by-laws of examinations, senate minutes, letters of appointment for examiners	0 1 2 3 ○ ○ ○ ○

No.	Standards	Examples of Evidence	Score Guide
5.13	The Faculty maintains academic standards and assessment criteria are consistently applied by moderation of examination question papers by external examiners.	Senate documents, moderated documents, appointment letters.	**0** **1** **2** **3** ○ ○ ○ ○
5.14	The Faculty adopts independent second examiners /external examiners in examinations as part of quality control and assurance of academic standards where relevant.	Manual of examination procedure, By-laws on examinations, records of adopting guidelines and using in examiners reports.	**0** **1** **2** **3** ○ ○ ○ ○
5.15	Detailed marking schemes / guidelines are provided to all examiners and procedures are available to ensure that examiners apply the marking scheme in a consistent manner to ensure transparency, consistency and fairness in marking.	Marking schemes; Quality assurance mechanisms and policies of the institution, policy documents, corporate plans, records on QA, QA mechanisms of relevant regulatory bodies and institution's rules and regulations, documents relating to meetings with marking examiners, and pilot marking.	**0** **1** **2** **3** ○ ○ ○ ○
5.16	Appropriate measures are in place to ensure the integrity of work submitted (assignments, reports, etc.) by students for evaluation and communicated effectively to students and examiners.	Code of conduct and ethical practices, student handbook, course information package, evidence provided through interaction with management, students and staff.	**0** **1** **2** **3** ○ ○ ○ ○

No.	Standards	Examples of Evidence	Score Guide
5.17	Disciplinary procedures for handling malpractices such as copying, and plagiarism are in place and strictly enforced and communicated to relevant staff and all students.	By-laws for examination offenses, manual of examination procedures, evidence of enforcement of disciplinary procedure; handbook, course information package.	0 1 2 3 ○ ○ ○ ○
5.18	The Faculty ensure that staff undertaking work related to assessment are competent to undertake their assigned roles and responsibilities and have no conflict of interest.	Evidence of knowledge about Manual of examination procedures, By-laws, regulations; training schedules for academics; Declaration forms.	0 1 2 3 ○ ○ ○ ○
5.19	The Faculty reviews and amends assessment regulations periodically as appropriate, to assure itself that the regulations fit for purpose.	Minutes of review meetings; amended rules and regulations; Curriculum Development Committee minutes; Memos and minutes of Faculty Boards and Senate; question papers, samples of answer scripts, mark sheets.	0 1 2 3 ○ ○ ○ ○
5.20	Graduation, course completion and retention rates are monitored on a continuous basis and appropriate action taken.	Results, MIS, database; reports; minutes of the course coordinators' meetings, relevant reports; feedback, evidence provided through interaction with staff, students and alumni; action taken on feedback.	0 1 2 3 ○ ○ ○ ○

No.	Standards	Examples of Evidence	Score Guide
5.21	The Faculty ensures that the degree awarded and the name of the degree complies with the guidelines (qualification descriptor), credit requirements and competency levels (level descriptor) detailed in the SLQF.	SLQF in possession; evidence of staff awareness and use of SLQF during course development; programme/course specifications.	**0 1 2 3** ○ ○ ○ ○

Criterion 6 - Innovative Initiatives and Good Practices

Scope - The institutional policy and strategy for promoting and fostering innovative and healthy practices and the extent of use of such practices are assessed. Innovative and Healthy practices are considered as practices which would lead to enhancement of quality of training and learning experience and the students' attributes.

Examples of such practices are stated here: use of ICT-platform to facilitate multi-mode delivery and student-centered learning; use of Open Educational Resources (OER) to complement undergraduate teaching; institutional mechanism to promote faculty engagement in research, innovation and postgraduate research, and its contribution to enhance quality of undergraduate training; performance appraisal system and reward mechanisms for staff, international collaborations and exchange of students and staff; student participation in co- curricular activities and institutional national level competition in sports, aesthetic activities and innovations; faculty-industry linkages and use of work-based and industry placement as a part of learning for undergraduates; adoption of policy and practice of credit transfer mechanism; strategies adopted for maintaining academic standards of the study programme; organizational arrangement to promote community and industry engagement/social mobilization programmes and income generation initiatives to diversify sources of funds.

This list by no means is exhaustive and if the Faculty practices any other innovative or healthy practice, they could include them in the SER with supportive evidence.

The scope of this Criterion   is captured in the following 'Standards'.

No.	Standards	Examples of Evidence	Score Guide
6.1	The Faculty has established and operates ICT- based platform (i.e. VLE/ LMS) to facilitate multi- mode teaching delivery and learning.	Inventory of teaching and learning methods adopted; physical evidence of presence of VLE/LMS; physical verification of use of VLE/LMS; number of courses /documentsuploaded into LMS;	0 -Inadequate 1 - Barely Adequate 2 -Adequate 3 - Good **0 1 2 3** ○ ○○○
6.2	The Faculty encourages the staff and students to use OER to supplement teaching and learning.	Faculty Board approved policy and guidelines on the use OER; evidence of use of OER by teachers and students.	**0 1 2 3** ○ ○○ ○

No.	Standards	Examples of Evidence	Score Guide
6.3	The Faculty recognizes complementarily between academic training, research and development (R&D), innovations, and industry engagement as part of the functions of academics.	Document reflecting Faculty policy and strategy on R&D; report on the benefits accrued for undergraduate training from R&D; records on institutional and national recognitions received by academics.	0 1 2 3 ○ ○○ ○
6.4	The Faculty has established coordinating and facilitating mechanisms for fostering research and innovation ,promotion of research and community outreach	Evidence of existence of an organizational entity or entities to promote and coordinate R&D and outreach activities; manual of procedures/documented guidelines on conducting R&D	0 1 2 3 ○ ○○ ○
6.5	Faculty uses the knowledge base to be responsive to societal needs and address community's issues (not just university's agenda)	MOUs between University and Heads of Organisations ;progress reports; Annual Report	0 1 2 3 ○ ○○ ○
6.6	The Faculty promotes thematic research on national issues, and disseminates and ensures a conducive environment for research	Adequate equipment and learning and research tools;;list of researchers ;research grants applied and received; records of past recipients	0 1 2 3 ○ ○○ ○
6.7	The Faculty implements reward system to encourage academics for achieving excellence in research and outreach activities.	Documentary evidence of staff reward schemes for academic and research excellence; records of past rewards conferred.	0 1 2 3 ○ ○○ ○

No.	Standards	Examples of Evidence	Score Guide
6.8	The study programme contains an undergraduate research project as a part of the teaching and learning strategy and encourages students to disseminate the findings.	By-laws/guidelines relating student research project management; sample of student projects conducted and students theses submitted; evidence of publication of student project reports as research communications.	**0 1 2 3** ◯ ◯◯ ◯
6.9	The Faculty has established and operationalized strong links with various international, national, governmental and non-governmental agencies and industries, and uses such linkages to build the reputation of the institution and expose students to the 'world of work' and to promote staff and student exchange.	List of academic and research collaboration established and operationalized with outside agencies; list of activities conducted through such collaborations.	**0 1 2 3** ◯ ◯◯ ◯
6.10	The Faculty has diversified its sources of income to complement the grants received through Government by engaging in income-generating activities.	List of income generating activities conducted; Reports on the benefits accrued through such activities; Physical verification of income generating activities.	**0 1 2 3** ◯ ◯◯ ◯

No.	Standards	Examples of Evidence	Score Guide			
6.11	The Faculty practices a credit-transfer policy in conformity with institutional policies that allows its students to transfer credits to another Faculty or submit credits earned from another to the Faculty concerned.	University approved policy and guidelines/by-laws regarding credit transfer; evidence of students making use of this option.	**0** ○	**1** ○	**2** ○	**3** ○
6.12	The Faculty promotes students and staff engagement in a wide variety of co-curricular activities such as social, cultural and aesthetic pursuits, community and industry-related activities, etc., and such pursuits are well supported with physical, financial and human resources.	Documentary evidence of institutional mechanism to promote and facilitate co-curricular activities; report on the co-curricular activities conducted.	**0** ○	**1** ○○	**2**	**3** ○
6.13	Faculty encourages student participation at regional/ national level competitions (such as IQ, innovation, sports, general knowledge, etc.) and rewards outstanding performers.	Faculty Board approved policy and guidelines relating to granting permission to participate at outside competitions; reward mechanism to give recognition to outstanding performers.	**0** ○	**1** ○○	**2**	**3** ○
6.14	The Faculty implements a mechanism for the students who do not complete the programme successfully to exit at a lower level with a diploma or certificate,	University approved policy and guidelines on fallback option; evidence of implementing fallback option.	**0** ○	**1** ○○	**2**	**3** ○

3.3 Procedure for Use of Standards for Assessment of Performance of the Programme

This procedure will describe how the standards of the six criteria based on the evidence given against each standard by the Faculty and the score guide are used by the external peer review team in arriving at the final assessment of performance of a study programme offered by Faculty. The Faculty may also use this procedure in self-assessment of the performance of their study programme. The terms mentioned below will be used in the validation and the subsequent judgement on assessment of the Faculty.

The terms mentioned below will be used in the validation and the subsequent judgment on assessment of the programme.

- Standard-wise judgement giving 'standard-wise score'
- Criterion-wise judgement giving 'raw criterion-wise score'
- Application of weightages to obtain 'actual criterion-wise score'
- Calculation of 'Overall Study Programme score'
- Grading of overall performance of the Programme of Study

The procedure is described in a series of steps.

Step 1 - The evidence given against each standard by the Programme of Study are carefully and objectively analyzed and assessed.

Step 2 - Based on the evidence, assessment of the extent to which each standard has been complied with / achieved by the Programme of Study is recorded by placing a tick in the appropriate circle against each standard on a 4 point scale from 0-3. (Table 3.1)

Each standard will receive a score from 0-3 (standard –wise score).

Step 3 - Performance of each Criterion is derived by totaling the scores gained in all the standards in respect of the Criterion. The value obtained is the 'raw criterion-wise score'.

Table 3.1 – Score Guide for Each Performance Indicators

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

Weightages of Criteria

Recognizing the variance in their relative importance in a Programme of Study, different criteria have been allotted differential weightages on a thousand scale. The weightages given in Table 3.2 will be used for calculating the 'actual criterion-wise score'.

Table 3.2 – Differential weightages of Criteria

No	Assessment Criteria	Weightage on a thousand scale
1	Programme Management	150
2	Programme Design and Development	150
3	Course design and development	200
4	Learning infrastructure, resources and learner support	300
5	Learner assessment and evaluation	150
6	Innovative Initiatives and Good Practices	50
	Total	1000

Step 4 - Based on the weightages listed in Table 3.2 and the formula given in Box 1, the 'raw criterion-wise score' is converted into an 'actual criterion-wise score'.

Taking Criterion 6 which has 14 standards as an example, and a fictitious value of 24 for the raw criterion score given by the review team, the actual criterion-wise score for Innovative Initiatives and Good Practices (Criterion 6) is estimated as 29. (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 = total score gained in all the standards in respect of the Criterion
- Actual criterion-wise score =(Raw criterion-wise score/Maximum raw score for each criterion) x weight age in a 1000 point scale

Example: Criterion 6 with weight age of 50 (Table 3.2) and 14 standards
Raw criterion-wise score (given by the peer team) = 24
Maximum Score = = (14 standards x 3) = 42
Weight age on a 1000 scale = 50 (as in Table 3.2)
Actual criterion-wise score = (24/42)* 50 = 28.6

Step 5 - The Overall Programme of Study score is derived by totalling all the 'actual criterion-wise scores' of the six criteria and converting the total to a percentage as exemplified in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3 – Programme of Study Score Conversion to Percentage

No	Assessment Criteria	Weighted minimum score*	Actual criteria-wise score
1	Programme Management	75	75
2	Programme Design and Development	75	70
3	Course design and development	100	100
4	Learning infrastructure, resources and learner support	150	200
5	Learner assessment and evaluation	75	80
6	Innovative Initiatives and Good Practices	25	29
	Total on a thousand scale		554
	%		55.4

*Represents 50% of the values given in Table 3.2

Table 3.4 Grading of Overall Performance of a Study Programme

Expected number of criteria with weighted minimum score	Overall University score %	Grade
6 (Six)	≥ 80	A
	70 – 79	B
	60 – 69	C
	< 60	D
5 (Five)	≥ 70	B
	60 – 69	C
	< 60	D
4 (Four)	≥ 60	C
	< 60	D

3 (Three) or less	Irrespective of University score	*D*

3.4 Final Assessment of the Performance of a Programme of Study

For a **Programme of Study** to receive an '*A*' Grade, the following conditions are applicable.

i)   Overall **Programme of Study** Score of $\geq 80\%$ and

ii) A score equal to or more than the weighted minimum score for each of all six criteria (Table 3.3).

For a **Programme of Study** to receive a '*B*' Grade, the following conditions are applicable.

i)   Overall **Programme of Study** Score of $\geq 70\%$ and

ii) A score equal to or more than the weighted minimum score for at least five out of the six criteria (Table 3.3).

For a **Programme of Study** to receive a '*C*' Grade, the following conditions are applicable.

i)   Overall **Programme of Study** Score of $\geq 60\%$ and

ii) A score equal to or more than the weighted minimum score for at least four out of the six criteria (Table 3.3).

For a **Programme of Study** to receive a '*D*' Grade, the following conditions are applicable.

i)   Overall **Programme of Study** Score of $< 60\%$ irrespective of weighted minimum criterion scores. (Table 3.3)

Table 3.5 Interpretation of grades

Grade	Performance descriptor	Interpretation of descriptor
A	Very Good	High level of accomplishment of quality expected of an academic institution; should move towards excellence
B	Good	Satisfactory level of accomplishment of quality expected of an academic institution; room for improvement
C	Satisfactory	Minimum level of accomplishment of quality expected of an academic institution; definitely requires improvement
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 on Self-Evaluation and the Review Process

Chapter Four

Self-Evaluation Process and Report

This chapter takes its premise that reputation is a key factor of higher education through open and distance learning (ODL) initiatives at course, programme, and institutional levels and that demonstrable quality, through systematic internal quality assurance mechanisms, is a necessary condition for ensuring quality outcomes of higher education through ODL. The nature of ODL, unlike the traditional face-to-face educational paradigm, predicated on the separation in time and pace of the teacher and the learner, demands that its quality assurance systems have a different focus. Within the Faculty responsibility for the Faculty's quality assurance work rests with the Faculty's QA unit in concert with the Departments, Divisions, Centres, and Units of the Central Campus together with the network of Regional and Study Centres.

4.1 Annual Internal Quality Monitoring

Quality assurance arrangements should ensure that:

i. The standard quality assurance (QA) procedures on the operation of courses and programmes, student feedback, student performance and other measures of quality of student learning experience and services, throughout the preceding year are time-tabled across the year, with prompts to ensure that necessary actions have been taken at the appropriate time to check whether the expected activities take place annually throughout the preceding year, the outcomes of which in turn should inform processes, particularly the periodic programme review . This annual internal quality monitoring is the building block of the university quality QA and quality enhancement (QE) processes.

ii. For administration, management and academic programmes and services there are appropriate records of all quality monitoring discussions /decisions at the appropriate levels which serve as evidence;

iii. The appropriate flow of information takes place between Faculties/Departments/Divisions/Units/Centres and the Faculty's quality assurance unit and all of them both at the central campus and Centres across the country.

In this context annual internal quality monitoring undertaken regularly by the Faculties with evidenced documents, besides serving as information for the Faculties , also provide the foundation to prepare the self-evaluation report (SER) for external reviews (EQA), truly reflecting quality processes of the internal routine functions of a Faculty with respect to its Programmes of Study over every three-year period (EQA 3-year cycle). (Figure 4.1)
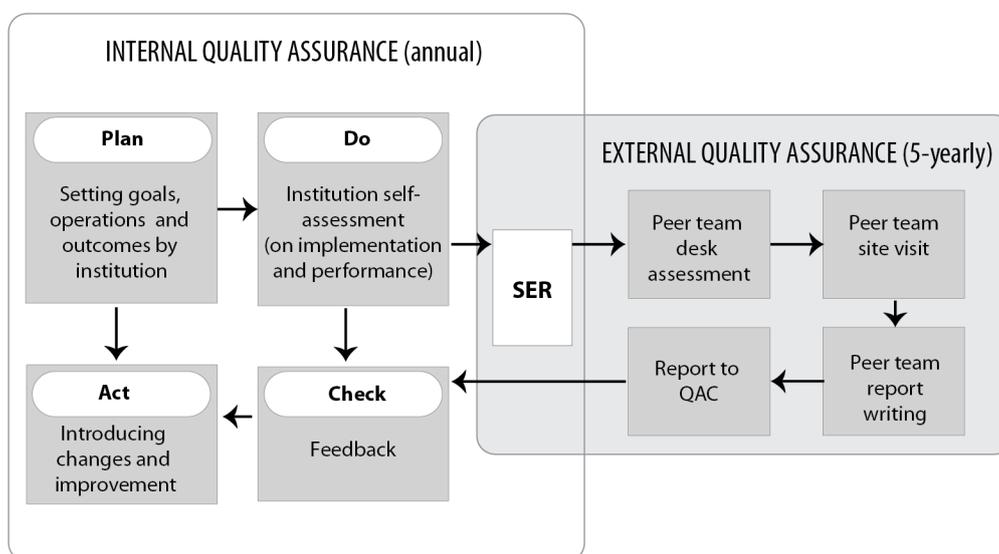
Figure 4.1 integration of IQA and EQA for continuous quality improvement

In this circuit, SER coming through the internal quality monitoring (IQA) serves as the first step in EQA and recommendations in the Programme Review Report serves as feedback to IQA which in turn spearheads the follow up actions on the findings. This integration of IQA and EQA provides the mechanism for continuous quality improvement /enhancement.

Where the Programmes do not practice an annual planning cycle of internal quality monitoring (self evaluation), a systematic self evaluation of all the six (06) quality criteria in this Manual must therefore be carried out before the external peer review and the results of the self- evaluation must be documented in a Self Evaluation Report (SER). A clear and structured procedure must be employed, which focuses on relevant quality areas.

4.2 Self-evaluation

Self-evaluation is a systematic and progressive evaluation process, whereby Programmes reflect on their own practices in order to ascertain more broadly the extent to which they are ensuring the highest standards of quality in the provision of education and training.

It is an opportunity as an institution for higher education to reflect on the Programme and its outputs/outcomes with a view to improving its own systems and services.

It is a self-reflective process (Figure 4.2) on its own inputs, process and outcomes (Figure 4.3), where the Faculty collects evidenced data and analyses it in order to make judgment about its own performance in relation to established standards in this Manual, with a view to improving its own systems and services towards achieving /enhancing quality. The driving force of a successful quality improvement strategy is self evaluation.
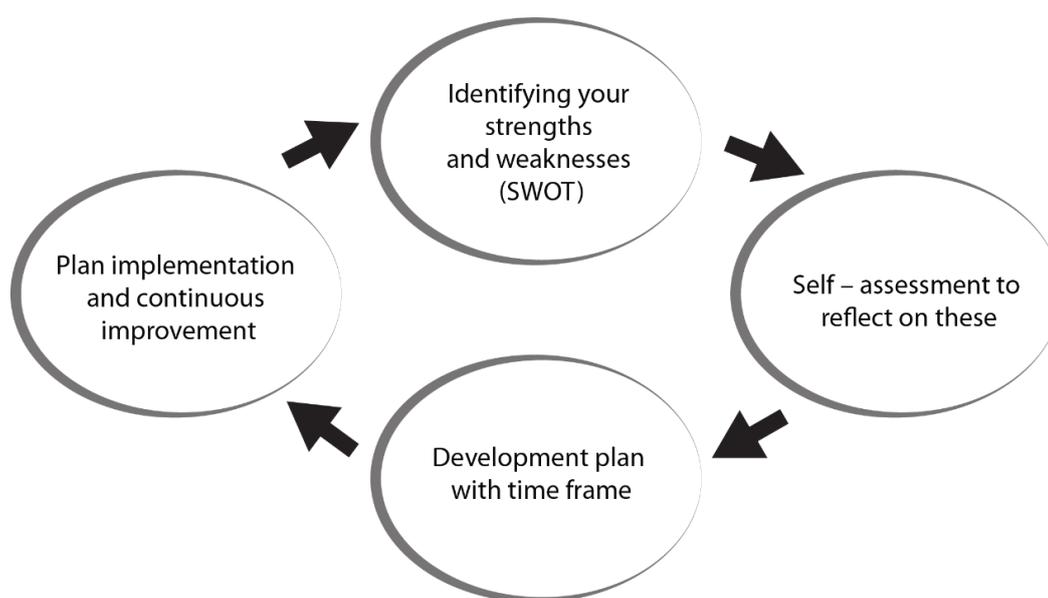
Figure 4.2 Reflective Learning Approach

Self-evaluation will establish 'where we are now' in relation to 'where we want to be' and propose actions and measures to narrow the gap between 'current reality' and the objectives /learning outcomes of the Programme thus, continuously promoting and enhancing the quality of the core activities of the Programme as a whole.

Self-evaluation would involve answering four fundamental questions: (Figure 4.4)
- What are we trying to do? (**plan**, process)
- How are we trying to? (procedure and **implementation**)
- How do we know it works? (**monitor & review**)
- How do you improve? (revise plans- **improve**)

The ***Plan, Implement, Monitor/Review, Improve*** quality assurance and continuous improvement model should be embedded in all aspects of the Programme of Study.

Input

- **Inputs comprise students, staff, physical facilities**
- **Number of students recruited, appropriate given the facilities and staff available**
- **Programme/course/module conducted at the right time**
- **Appropriateness of the qualifications and experience of the staff**
- **How the facilities can be improved to achieve the ILOs**

Process

- **Educational process practices adherence to the SLQF stipulations implemented**
- **Use made of external reference points, SLQF, SBS, standards in the Review Manuals**
- **Development, use and publication of Programme/Course Specifications**
- **The appropriateness in terms level and the amount of the educational material**
- **the appropriateness of the learning content**
- **learning outcomes, students need to achieve**
- **they are being achieved**
- **being assessed**

Product / Outcomes

- have led to a tangible improvement in the quality of graduate.
- has achieved the appropriate ILOs stipulated by the curriculum; completion rates, graduation rates; student satisfaction rates etc
- employability of the graduates

Figure 4.3 Inputs, processes and outputs of the system

PLAN

Establish and define:

The objectives to be achieved

The processes neccessary to deliver results

The expected output

Clear management direction

Responsibilities for the objectives

Ensure how the plan is communicated

IMPLEMENT

Implement the plan

Execute the processes

Assign roles and responsibilities

Coordinate and document activities

Monitor and record progress against plan

Collect data

IMPROVE

Establish and define:

Assess results from monitor/review stage

Determine changes needed in order to ensure plan's objectives can be met

Adjust processes accordingly

MONITOR & REVIEW

Study results of implement stage

Gather feedback

Compare results to see if the plan's objectives and requirements have been met

PLAN · IMPLEMENT · MONITOR & REVIEW · IMPROVE

Figure 4.4 Quality Assurance and Continuous Improvement Model

Why self-evaluate?

Responsibility for quality and standards of Programmes lie primarily within Faculties.. Internal monitoring and evaluation is the corner stone of quality assurance in higher education. Faculty self-awareness informed by periodic self-evaluation of the strengths and areas for improvement provide the principal source for any external review process.

How does self-evaluation fit into the review process?(fig. 4.5)

Review process has three distinct process:

1- Preparation   a) by the Faculty

b) by the review team

2 - The review visit

3 - The review report and process prior to publication

In part 1 which is the preparation by the Faculty , soon after the Faculty submits the letter of intent to QAC Faculty is notified of the date for submission of the SER. The Faculty (Programme) undergoes the process of self-evaluation to complete its SER by a date agreed. SER prepared by the Faculty becomes a key document for the Faculty and the review team. SER while helping the Institution to understand its own strengths and weaknesses, also helps the review team to plan its review process more effectively and efficiently. **Section 4.4** provides guidance on how to prepare the SER.
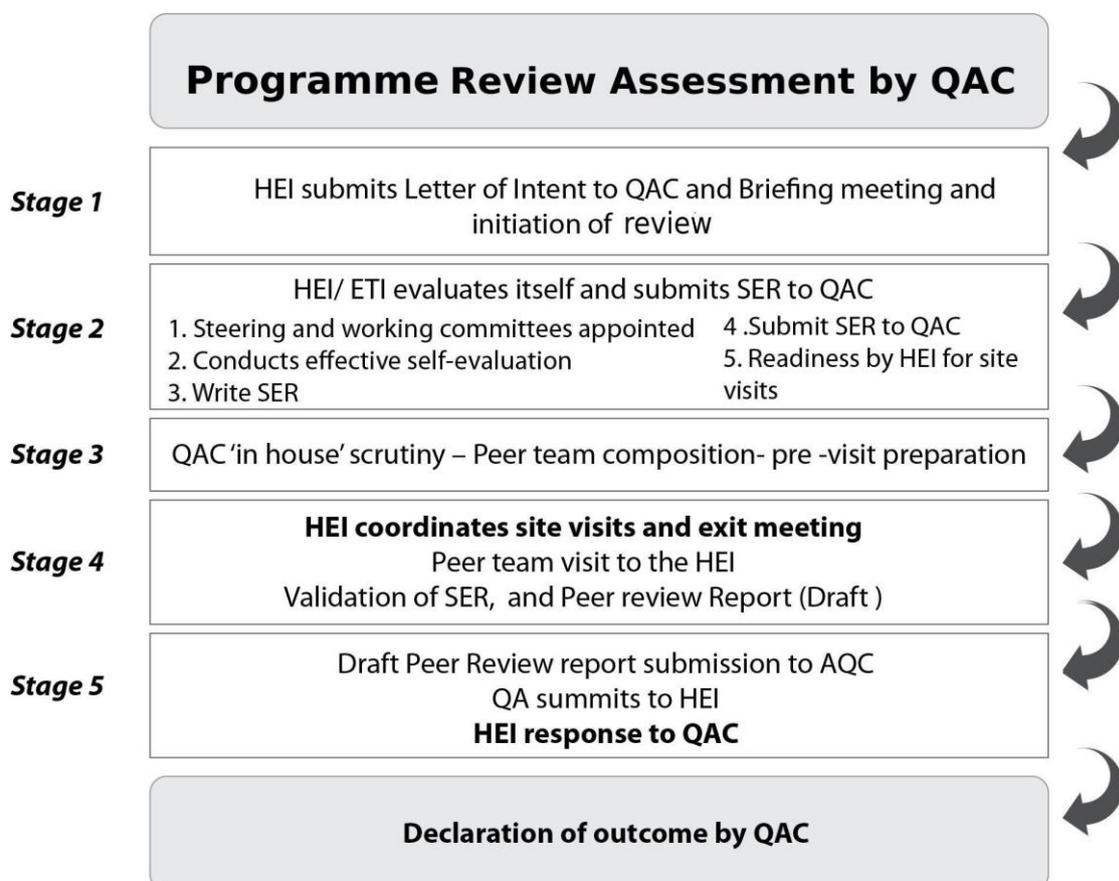
Figure 4.5 Major stages in the Programme Review Process

4.3 Organisation of the Self Evaluation Process

Completing the self-evaluation process comprises five key steps: (Figure 4.6)

1 - Preparatory phase

2 - Designing and planning

3 - Data collection

4 - Analysis and report writing

5 - Review and repeat
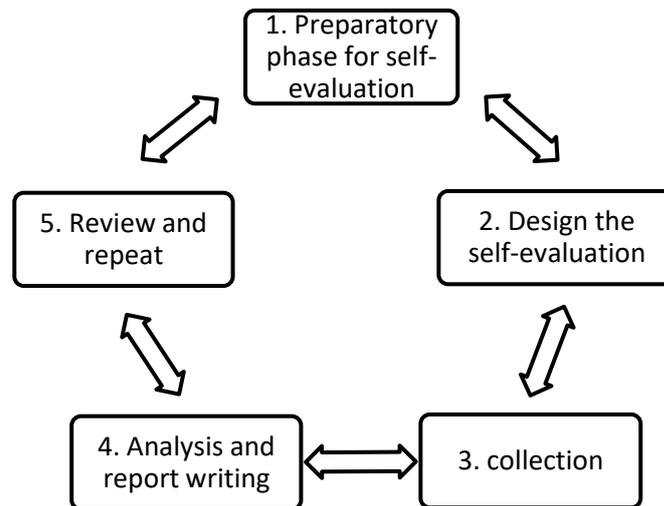
Figure 4.6 Steps in Conducting Self-Evaluation

4.3.1 Preparatory phase

Pre-requisites for an effective self-evaluation process are:

- Adequate financial, physical and material resources.
- Most recent review reports, previous self-evaluation reports, annual reports etc.
- Time for staff involved.
- Comprehensive time table and plan for self-evaluation. A convenient and effective method for establishing a time table is to work back from the date set for submission of SER to QAC. Time needs to be allowed for gathering data and analysis, review drafts, final editing, and rewriting, and institutional circulation and submission to QAC.

4.3.2 Designing and planning

The design will provide the framework for guiding the sources of data, the data collection methods, the participants in the process, and the resource requirements

- ➢ Who will carry out the self-evaluation?
- ➢ How will it be carried out?
- ➢ What are the systems for collecting, analyzing, and reporting on performance?
- ➢ When the stages will be carried out?
- ➢ how the results will be reported?

Steering Committee

Self-evaluation should never be the work of a single person or few persons. It is desirable to set up a steering committee coordinated or chaired by a senior academic (IQAC Head) appointed by the Head of the Institution/ Faculty (Figure 4.7)

To make the process more participatory the Chair of the steering Committee may establish small working groups, each representing the various operational units and led by a steering committee member

Composition of the Steering Committee:
> Chair
> Registrar or nominee
> Bursar or nominee
> Librarian or nominee
> Director SDC
> Representing faculties (Dean or nominee)
> Other relevant officials

Each working group could be assigned to investigate and report on one or more criteria and their associated standards. TOR for the activities of the working groups should be clearly defined as part of the planning process. Capacity building of all members should be briefed on their role, the scope, standards and best practices and self-evaluation process and procedure for evidence-based assessment.

Use of working groups helps in providing for the participation of the faculty as contributing to the completion of the task skillfully and within a timeframe.

Membership of a group of this sort should also be regarded as a useful professional development exercise providing experience in QA process and insight into the effectiveness of their own activities as providers of their own programme/course.

Figure 4.7 Programme Review Steering Committee with working committees Responsibilities of the Steering Committee

- Planning and monitoring the process
- Ensuring that the staff and students who would be involved are briefed about the process
- Providing leadership to the entire self-evaluation processes
- Determining the key issues for self-evaluation
- Preparing the design
- Developing responsibilities to working groups and coordinate their work
- Regularly meeting with Chairs of Working groups if Steering Committee members are not chairing the working groups.
- Realistic and detailed time table to be established and implemented
- Using institution's intranet as an effective resource for sharing information. Another possible approach is to create an electronic repository on the intranet or the website.
- Completing drafts of the working groups into a draft report
- Arranging the workshops with all stakeholders for finalizing the draft: Evidence to be shared with the institution and the relevant stakeholders, who have a knowledge of data and who can contribute to the analysis of data and evidence are involved in the process where appropriate.
- Overseeing completion of the SER

Engagement of internal and external stakeholders

- Learners should be involved in the working groups
- Feedback from learners should be gathered through questionnaires, interviews, focus groups, and surveys
- Learners' level of satisfaction with their programmes and destination of learners after graduation should be included
- Key partners and employers - About student participation in work placements, and/or entering employment market, and the relevance of employment opportunities have to be adopted
- Database - Compiling and analyzing existing data is an essential element - e.g. recent evaluations, progress reports, annual outcome assessment reports and SERs

Communication

- Self evaluation process should be open for faculty students and other stakeholders to participate and offer suggestions

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- The steering committee should meet regularly with the working groups in order to monitor the progress and make any adjustment in the plan, if required.
- The steering committee ensures that the working groups interact effectively within the Faculty/Programme community during the process

Triangulation of evidence from multiple sources

- All of the standards require judgement to be made about an aspect of the work of the institution
- These will take the form of inferences based on evidence drawn from various resources
- Some of the judgements will be relatively simple to make, and will be based on evidence which bears directly on the judgement being made
- Most judgements will have to be supported by more than one piece of evidence, coming from different sources (triangulation) (Figure 4.8)
- Multiple sources of evidence required to prove for e.g. a processes, is given below
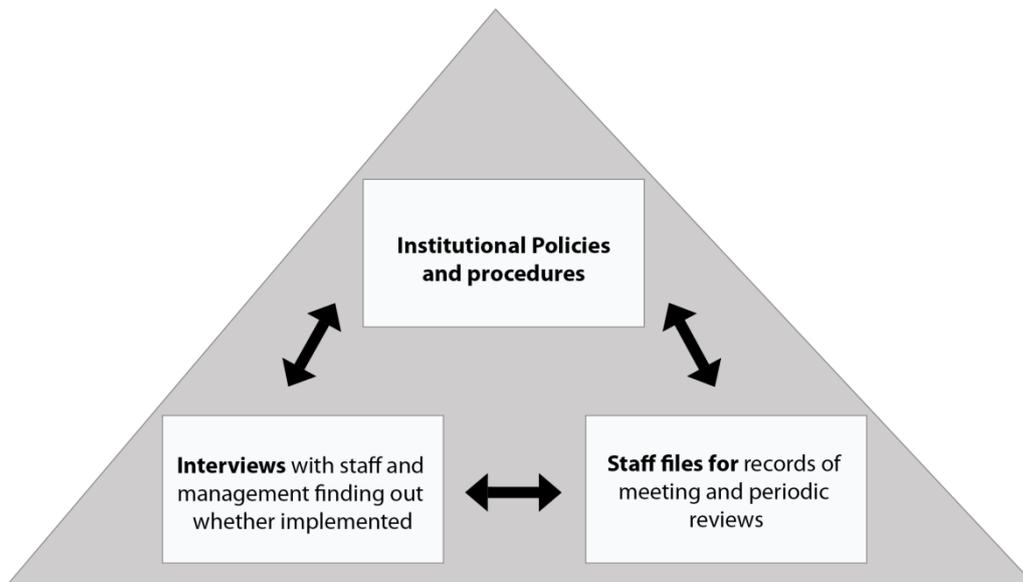
Figure 4.8 Triangulating evidence (adapted from COL, 2008)

4.3.3 Data collection (Figure 4.9)
- Both qualitative and quantitative data should be collected depending on the issues being explored
- Quantitative data may include financial information, numbers of students trained over a specific period
- Qualitative data can include observational records, interviews, case studies,
- Data sources can be both internal and external
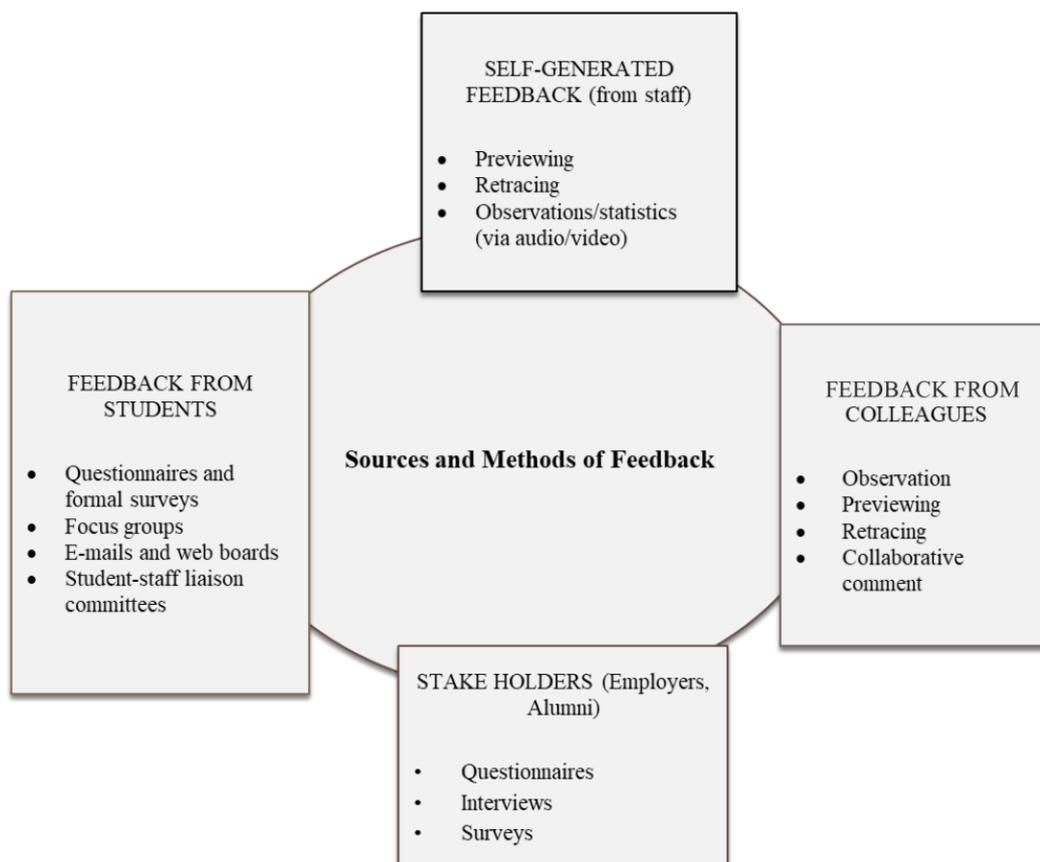
Figure 4.9 Sources and Methods of Feedback

4.3.4 Analysis and Report writing

- Analysis and report writing must be guided by honesty and frankness
- A report in compliance with the structure stipulated in the PR Manual, must be written on the outcomes of evaluation.
- Draft reports with respect to each criterion checked by the chairs of the working groups should then be forwarded to the steering committee.
- The steering committee edits the reports of the coordinators of the working groups with respect to each criterion submitted by the coordinators of the working group.
- Steering committee compiles a draft SER for discussion with a wider audience.
- The steering committee might organize a workshop or seminar with all relevant stakeholders to discuss the draft SER written according to the prescribed guidelines in the Manual before finalizing it.
- A cross section of Faculty community, Faculty Board Members , other relevant stakeholders, is expected to participate in the finalization of the SER and own it.

The underlying assumption in insisting on conducting an effective self-evaluation is that a Faculty that really understands itself-its strengths and weaknesses, its potentials

and limitations-is likely to be more successful in carrying out its educational mission than one without such self-awareness.

The fact that the SER is not to be a mere compilation of data on the achievements and operation of a Programme of Study is emphasized by all QA Agencies. They also insist that the report must be analytical, evaluative, and hopefully self-critical. The guidelines on institutional preparations promote the participatory approach to ensure wide involvement of the Faculty community in preparing the report.

A suggested formatting and style sheet is provided in Appendix 1.

In summary, an effective and useful evaluation process has to balance two needs:
1) to be organized in a manner best fit for the Faculty's Objectives and processes, and 2) to address the requirements of the QAC.

Regardless of how the Faculty chooses to align these needs, there are a number of principles that support a successful self-evaluation process. It should:

- address the Programme assessment standards, QAC policies,and meet other QAC requirements,
- provide content and evidence for the Programme Self Evaluation Report,
- include institution–set standards for student achievement and learning outcomes,
- provide and analyze existing evaluation planning and improvement data,
- lead to an assessment, based on analysis of data, of the quality of the Programme and services and its program effectiveness as well as the formulation of plans and actions for improvement, and
- involve the Institution stakeholders who have a role in improving quality of the Programme .

4.3.5 Review and repeat
In keeping with the culture of continuous quality improvement the process is reviewed and repeated.

4.4 Self Evaluation Report

Every university or HEI is committed to a policy of self-evaluation of all its programmes, services, procedures and administrative mechanisms on an annual basis which encompasses a quality self-assessment. This is because the responsibility for quality and standards in higher education lies primarily within the university/HEI, not outside of it. Institutional self-awareness, informed by periodic self-evaluation of the

strengths and areas for improvement provide the principal point of reference for any external review process.

Therefore, the Self-Evaluation Report (SER) prepared by theFaculty/Programme , becomes a key document both for the Faculty and for the review team. A carefully and concisely prepared SER, while helping the Faculty to understand its own strengths and weaknesses, also helps the review team to plan its review process more effectively and efficiently. This chapter provides guidance on how to prepare the SER that will help maintain uniformity in SERs prepared by all Universities/HEIs.

4.4.1 Purpose of the Self-Evaluation Report (SER)

The purpose of the SER is to provide the review team with an account of how the Faculty/Programme knows that it meets the expectations of stakeholders and the wider society in terms of the Standards and Best Practices set out in this Manual, and those of statutory professional bodies where relevant. Section 3.2 of this Manual has Tables under each criterion with the standards listed in the second column and examples of sources of evidence alongside each standard in the third column. Therefore, the citation of all pertinent evidence becomes a major requirement of the SER and the review team expects provision of all relevant documentary evidence to support each claim that the university or the HEI makes with regard to the standards. Evidence may include one or more which have been listed in the Tables in section 3.2 and any which the institution considers appropriate.

4.4.2 Scope of the SER

Scope: The SER reflects the following aspects pertaining to the Faculty/Programme
   a) Degree of internalization of best practices and level of achievement of Standards
   b) Degree to which the claims are supported by documented evidence
   c) Accuracy of the data and statements made in the SER

  a) Degree of internalization of Best practices and level of achievement of Standards

   The SER accomplishes the above mentioned purpose by demonstrating the degree of internalization of best practices by the Faculty/Programme and the level of achievement of Standards set out under ten Criteria prescribed in chapters 2 and 3 of this Manual.in doing so,the SER would demonstrate the commitment of the Institution /HEI to uphold its mission of producing graduates with desired attributes. The SER should describe and analyze in

depth with supporting evidence and comments the effectiveness of the ways in which the Faculty/Programme discharges its responsibility for maintaining academic standards, quality, ethical behavior, and adherence to good practices.

This will include adherence to the Best Practices and Standards given under the ten criteria in Chapters 2 & 3 of this manual:

Criterion   1: Programme Management
Criterion   2: Programme Design and Development
Criterion   3: Course Design and Development
Criterion   4: Learning Infrastructure, Resources and Learner support
Criterion   5: Learner Assessment and Evaluation
Criterion   6: Innovative and Healthy Practices

The SER should indicate the ways in which the Faculty has responded to national policy and guidelines in safeguarding standards and promoting high quality.

The SER should also indicate how the Faculty has responded to the recommendations of previous programme/subject reviews, supported by documentary evidence. It is not the responsibility of the review team to seek out evidence to support the Faculty/Programme's claims but it is the Faculty that should furnish the evidence required during the visit.

b)   *Degree to which the claims are supported by documented evidence*

Every claim of compliance and level of attainment has to be supported with multiple sources of documentary evidence. Citation of all pertinent evidence becomes a major requirement of the SER. Therefore it is the responsibility of the Faculty to furnish all relevant all documents. Claims not supported by documented evidence will not be considered by the review team. Section 3.2 of this Manual provides examples of sources of evidence relevant to each standard and the template given in the Annex demonstrates the way the evidence should be coded and presented.

c)   *Accuracy of data and statements made in the SER*

It is imperative that the Faculty/Programme's claims and evidence mentioned in the SER are accurate and verifiable. It should not be used to make unsubstantiated claims. In instances where changes are in progress and evidence not yet available, the Faculty should state so. In such instances, the Institution/HEI should seek to address why the changes were necessary, how it is managing the process of change, and the expected outcomes of the changes.

4.4.3 Focus of the Report:

The main focus of the SER is to describe the ways in which the Faculty safeguards the standards of the awards made in its name through maintaining quality of the six areas of its functioning as identified by the six (06) criteria mentioned in Chapter 3 of this Manual. The SER should reflect the extent to which these matters are dealt with by the Faculty/Programme clearly, convincingly, and honestly.

A good Programme Self Evaluation Report should concisely state the Faculty/Programme's current and sustained compliance with Programme standards and QAC policies. If additional work remains for the future, the SER should generate concrete details and actionable improvement plans including timelines and outcomes for that work. A good report must be meaningful and useful to the members of the Faculty, as well as provide sufficient information for the peer evaluation team about the Faculty , evidence of its achievements, and how it meets the QAC standards.

4.4.4 Guidelines for Preparation of SER

The Faculties/Programmes are expected to prepare the SER according to the structure given below:

    Section 1. Introduction to the Faculty
    Section 2. Process of preparing the SER
    Section 3. Compliance with Criteria and Standards
    Section 4. Summary

The contents of each section are outlined below:

Section 1. Introduction to the Study Programme

The Introduction section begins with an overview of the Faculty and an outline of the establishment and major milestones in the development of the programme of study.This will be followed by a description (preferably in tabular form) of the following topics arranged under separate sub-headings:

- Graduate profile and intended learning outcomesof the study programme
- Number of departments contributing to the programme
- Number of students enrolled and their choices of subject combinations
- Numbers and profile of the academic,academic support and non-academic staff

- Learning resource system (library, ELTU, laboratories, computer facilities etc.)
- Student support and management

The Introduction should also contain a description of the context in which the Faculty operates by providing an analysis of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) pertaining to the study programme. Furthermore, it should describe the major changes initiated/implemented since the last review, and how the changes have impacted on the quality of the programme. This information will help the review team to contextualize the study programme and plan the review process.

Section 2. The process of preparing the SER

This section should contain an account of the process of preparation of the SER and may include the following:

- Appointment of of SER writing team with the ToR
- Composition and responsibilities of working teams in charge of the chapters and Criteria.
- Familiarization of the programme review manual and the methodology of the review process
- Activity schedules of the working teams and methods of collection of information
- Collation of data and evidence and analysis and synthesis of the draft report by the working groups
- Compilation into a draft SER by the Chairperson of the writing team
- Forum to discuss the draft report
- Finalizing the report and submission

Section 3. Compliance with the Criteria and Standards

In this section, the SER describes the extent to which the study programme complies with the standards of the six criteria described in Chapters 2 and 3 of this Manual.Therefore , Chapter 3 of the Manual should be used as a guide in compiling this section.

This section should be structured as six sub-sections under the six criteria in the same order as prescribed in the manual. It is advised to prepare each sub-section of this section in tabular form using the template given in the Appendix. Under each criterion, column 1 should carry the serial number of the standard, column 2 the Study Programme's claims of compliance, column 3 the documentary evidence to support each claim of compliance, and column 4 the codes of the evidence used.

At the end of each sub-section, a summary statement on how the programme has complied with the Standards of the respective Criterion should be made in the appropriate box assigned for the purpose.

Section 4. Summary

The summary should convey to the review team the effectiveness of the ways in which the Faculty discharges its responsibility for maintaining academic standards prescribed in the Programme Review Manual and quality of the awards of its programme of study.This section should reflect the degree to which the Faculty has internalized the best practices given in the manual, and the internal monitoring mechanism (IQAC) used for continuous quality enhancement.It should also indicate the deficiencies /gaps and the actions taken/planned to address those deficiencies/gaps.

4. 5 Length of the SER

The self-evaluation report should be concise and analytical, self-explanatory as far as possible, minimizing the need for the review team to request further clarifications and readily understandable to the reviewer , with references to all relevant evidence. It should not exceed 8,000 words (using Times New Roman in 12 point font size with 1.5 line space on A 4 size pages) excluding appendices. Appendices should provide illustrative or statistical information essential to the main text.

Chapter Five

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 will provide guidelines on the selection of reviewers, their training and attributes, composition of the review team, profile of the reviewers, attributes of the review chair, review visit arrangements and schedules of meetings etc.

5.1 Important specific requirements and characteristics of the review procedure

- A focus on the people involved and their interests and needs;
- Objectivity and impartiality of the peers;
- Transparency of all elements of the procedure to all persons involved;
- Confidentiality rules on the use of results which are to be set up in advance and are to be adhered to by all persons involved;
- Avoidance of conflicts of interest and direct competition between peers and the reviewed institution;
- Promotion of openness , integrity, and sincerity as a pre-requisite for mutual learning;
- Promotion of inquiring mind and critical attitude both in the peers and the reviewed institution;
- Gender-sensitive language is used in all reports and during the peer reviews;
- The design and implementation of peer review not as a typical bureaucratic procedure but as a dynamic and motivating process which both the reviewed institution and the peers can benefit from;

5.2 Selection of Reviewers

The QAC will maintain a pool of Programme reviewers from which it will select and appoint reviewers for each Programme review. The reviewers will be senior academics; either those who are holding or have held managerial or other senior positions such as current or past Vice-Chancellors, Directors of Institutes, Deans, or

Professors and one member from outside of academia. The following criteria will be considered in the selection of Programme reviewers:

- Self-declaration by the reviewer of any involvement with a particular Institution / institute / subject department / programme which may lead to a conflict of interest and render an individual ineligible as a member of an external review team.
- Undergone training as a reviewer.
- Experience in quality assurance activity in areas appropriate to the review.
- Awareness of national, professional and employers' requirements of graduates.
- Acceptability to the Institution being reviewed, as independent reviewers with suitable subject or institutional expertise.
- Knowledge and understanding of the guidelines prescribed by the QAC codes of practice and other key reference points, including the SLQF.

5.3 Composition of the Review Team

The review team would be ideally composed of five members with adequate gender representation. It is essential that one of the members should be selected from outside of the academia, who can look at issues from a more industry-related or professional perspective. The QAC will identify the review chair from among the team of five members selected for the review team.

5.4 Profile of Reviewers

Reviewers have a key role to play in institutional review. Their qualities as individuals and the coherence and effectiveness of review teams are vital to the success and credibility of an external review process. Informed, constructive and perceptive reviewers are extremely persuasive ambassadors for the process within and beyond higher education.

The 'reviewer profile' below, describes the attributes and characteristics expected of Institutional Reviewers:

- High degree of professional integrity
- An enquiring disposition.
- Personal authority and presence.
- Ability to act 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 judgment.
- Ability to make appropriate judgments in the context of complex institutions different from their own, particularly those dedicated to ODL mode

- Experience in organization and management, particularly in relation to teaching and learning matters in ODL.
- High standard of oral and written communication, preferably with experience in writing formal reports.
- Knowledge and understanding of the review topics, principles, and concepts.
- Knowledge of the special characteristics and conditions of the educational provision to be reviewed.
- Knowledge of quality assurance and quality enhancement procedures.

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

5.5 Review Chair - Training and Role

Review Chair functions as the formal point of contact with the UGC-QAC and the institution being reviewed, before, during, and after the review. The success of the review team depends mainly on the Chairperson. All Review Chairs must possess extensive experience of HEI in general, and ODL in particular and familiarity with assurance of standards and quality. Wherever possible, Review Chair will receive the same training as that provided for reviewers. They may also be required to attend workshops and conferences arranged by the QAC.

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 analyze the documents provided by the institution and develop a robust evidence base on which to make judgments.

The review chair is responsible for maintaining an overview of the range of review activities in the institutional review, and for helping the reviewers to apportion their time effectively. The achievement of an appropriate balance between the various activities requires planning in advance of, and co-ordination throughout the review.

Above all, the review chair must enable the team to develop a robust evidence base on which to make judgments.

5.6 Conduct of Reviewers

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

- respectful, professional conduct towards staff and students at all times;
- application of guidance provided through reviewer training on the conduct of peer observation;
- acceptance of the privacy of review business for the duration of a review visit;
- acceptance of individual responsibility for assigned tasks within the review team;
- acceptance of collective responsibility for the review team's judgments.

5.7 Pre-Review Arrangements.

The requirements for the review visit and the responsibilities of the respective parties to facilitate clarity, consistency, and effectiveness of the review process are outlined below.

5.7.1 Quality Assurance Council (QAC)/University Grants Commission

- QAC /UGC in consultation with the respective Faculty appoints the Review Team and Review Chair;
- Informs the Dean or Head of the Faculty and the Director of the IQAU of the University and the Chair of the IQAC of the Faculty of the review team members and their contact information naming the Review Chair as the focal point of contact;
- Organises a pre-review meeting among the panel of reviewers, and the IQAC Chair to discuss desk review findings and to plan the review visit;
- Make arrangements for transport from the places of residence of reviewers to destined Faculty and accommodation
- Assigns one member of the UGC /QAC to be present on the first day of the review visit.

5.7.2 Faculty

- Designation of the Chair/secretary of the IQAC of the respective Faculty as the focal point of contact to coordinate communications between the Faculty and the review team and to provide logistical support , and inform the QAC/UGC of the contact information of the focal point of contact;
- Decide on the date of the eview visit and the review visit schedule in consultation with the Review Chair,the Dean of the Faculty,and Chair of the IQAC;

- Allocation of a room with computer, printer,and multimedia facility and adequate space for display of documentary evidence and for team members to hold discussions and meetings;
- Provision of secretarial assistance and arrangements for refreshments and meals by the Chair of the IQAC
- Provision of internal transport by the Faculty

5.7.3 Review Chair and Members

- Review members come for the pre-review meeting after thorough desk evaluation of the SER, with notes on required additional information , and the tentative outcomes of desk evaluation.
- Review Chair assigns the responsibilities to the team members at the pre-review meeting;
- Review Chair makes a list of additional inputs required by the review team for the review visit and informs the Faculty through the focal point of the Faculty

5.8 Review Visit

Review team shall arrive at the Faculty on the pre-determined date and time. The first meeting of the Review Team will be with the Vice-Chancellor of the University, Dean of the relevant Faculty, Head/Coordinator of the study programme ,Director of the IQAU, and the Chair of the IQAC of the relevant Faculty. This would be followed by a meeting at the Faculty with the Dean, Heads and all relevant academic and administrative staff involved in programme management. Following this meeting the review should proceed according to schedule.

5.9 Review Process

The review process will involve the following activities:
- Scrutinizing documentary evidence
- Meetings /discussions with staff and students
- Observation of teaching learning sessions
- Debriefing

5.9.1 Scrutinizing documentary evidence

The aim is to consider evidence furnished by the institution/Faculty to verify the claims made in the SER. The review team will carefully read the documentation provided by the institution? Faculty as evidence. It will endeavor to keep to a minimum the amount of documentation it requests during the visit. The review team should always seek to use all information provided in arriving in judgements.

5.9.2 Meetings / discussions with staff and students

The aim is to get a clear picture of the institution's? Faculty's processes in operation, and to clarify the claims made in the SER. The review team should ensure having meetings with individuals / small groups of the following stakeholders along with scrutinizing documented evidence and observing facilities and teaching learning sessions:

- Academic staff of the Faculty/Department/ Unit /Division;
- Members of the IQAC
- Members of the non-academic staff;
- Students or student representatives;
- Representatives of alumni and other stakeholders such as moderators/external examiners,extended faculty,employers,industry,community representatives involved with Faculty initiatives , where relevant.

5.9.3 Observation of teaching learning sessions , and facilities

Direct observation of selected on-going teaching learning activities and field /laboratory work should be arranged in conjunction with the focal point of contact.The team may also request a tour of the main campuses , though the extent and purpose of this should be judged in the light of the team's view of its main lines of inquiry.

5.9.4 Debriefing

At the conclusion of the visit, an interactive meeting will be held between the Review Team and the following:

- Dean of the Faculty
- Heads of the Departments
- Academic Coordinates
- Senior members of the academic staff
- Chair and members of the IQAC
- Student Representatives of the Faculty Board
- Representatives from Academic Support Staff.

At this meeting the Review Chair will present the highlights of the findings and facilitate an interactive discussion.Within 2-4 weeks of the review visit , the Review Chair along with the members should prepare the Review Report and submit to the QAC/UGC.

Chapter Six

Programme Review Report

The Programme Review Report (PRR) is the final outcome of an external peer review of a programme of study. The PRR, following acceptance by the Faculty concerned and final approval of the QAAC, will enter the public domain through the UGC website.

The PRR is expected to provide a concise account of the peer review process, the findings of the review, documents perused, analysis of the evidence provided, facilities available, teaching learning processes observed, issues identified, and discussions held. The report will conclude with the review team's reflections and conclusions on the level of accomplishment by the Faculty with regard to the quality and standard of the programme that has been reviewed. The report will also include commendations on the accomplishments by the Faculty and recommendations for quality enhancement.

6.1 Purpose of the Programme Review Report (PRR)

The purpose of the PRR is
- to inform the Faculty and other stakeholders, the findings of the external peer review with regard to the quality of the training and learning experiences provided to students by the programme and the standard of the award;
- to provide a reference point to support and guide the Faculty in continuing quality assurance activities towards quality enhancement and excellence.

6.2 Scope of the Report

The PRR will cover the following aspects pertaining to the particular programme that has undergone the external peer review.
- A brief description of the University, Faculty and the Programme of Study.
- A brief description of the review process (schedule of meetings as an appendix).
- The review team's observations on the Self-Evaluation Report (SER).
- Overview of the approach to quality assurance by the Faculty.
- Assessment of performance of the programme based on the standard-wise scores and the actual criteria-wise scores.
- Final judgment of performance of the programme based on the programme score.
- Commendations and recommendations

6.3 Review Judgments

The Programme Review Manual prescribes six core areas (criteria) that will be scrutinized during the external peer review process that all study programmes in the Open University and other HEIs offering programmes via ODL in Sri Lanka will be subjected to at regular intervals of time (3-4 year cycle in general).

Programme Review involves analysis of claims made in the SER and validation of the evidence presented during the site visit with respect to the six criteria and standards in a programme of study. Based on an objective analysis of the criteria and standards of the programme under review as described in chapter 3 it will adopt the 4-point scale for scaling their verdicts and to see how far the institution has progressed on the way to meeting the 'Standards' the review team will arrive at a collective judgment on the performance of the 'Standards' of the study programme. Score for each 'Criterion' is computed as directed in chapter 3, section 3.3.

Following reflection on the review visit, the review team will arrive at firm judgments and recommendations. Judgments should not be negative but constructive and supported by evidence. Recommendations should not be prescriptive but stated in a manner whereby the Faculty will be able to build upon what is already in place and strive towards quality improvement.

6.4 Format of the Programme Review Report (PRR)

The PRR will be structured under eight broad sections as given below.

Section 1 - Brief introduction to the programme
Section 2 – Review team's observations on the Self - Evaluation Report (SER)
Section 3 - A brief description of the Review Process
Section 4 - Overview of the Faculty's approach to Quality and Standards
Section 5 - Judgment on the six criteria of Programme Review
Section 6 - Grading of Overall Performance of the programme
Section 7 - Commendations and Recommendations
Section 8 – Summary

Section 1 –Brief Introduction to the Programme

This section will start with a brief introduction to the programme and its relevance in the local/international context. It will give a history of the Faculty/Institute offering the programme, the strength, qualifications and experience of academic staff, number of students enrolled, staff student ratio, infrastructure and facilities available for student support as given in the SER and observed by the peer review team during the review visit. This would enable the reader to get an idea of the context of the Faculty/Institute, its strengths and weaknesses and any constraints faced by the Faculty with regard to delivery and sustainability of the programme.

This section will include a comment on the response of the Faculty/Institute to the recommendations made at previous Programme/Subject reviews.

Section 2 - Review Team's Observations on the Self-Evaluation Report (SER)
This section will indicate whether the SER has been prepared according to the guideline given in the Programme Review Manual using a participatory approach involving all constituents of the Faculty. The review team will comment on whether the evidence has been presented alongside the standards and criteria as shown in the template provided in the Appendix.

The review team could comment on the analysis of the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) as given in the SER and whether documents such as the Corporate Plan/Strategic Management Plan and any other relevant documents had been submitted alongside the SER.

The team will make its observations on the extent to which the programme reflects the mission, goals and objectives set out in its corporate plan and whether student-centred learning and outcome-based education approach has been adopted along with a clearly laid down graduate profile. The team will see whether the standards and quality are in accordance with agreed national guidelines such as the Sri Lanka Qualifications Framework (SLQF) and the Subject Benchmark Statements (SBS) if available.

The review team will comment on whether remedial measures have been implemented to rectify deficiencies identified at previous programme/subject reviews and if not, what actions the Faculty/Institute is making towards implementation of the recommendations. Any obstacles encountered in the implementation of previous recommendations and constraints under which the programme is currently functioning could be mentioned in this section.

Section 3 – A Brief Description of the Review Process
This section will describe the steps involved in preparation for the programme review by the review team and by the Faculty. This section will outline details of the review visit such as the schedule of meetings with different constituents of the Faculty (which could be provided as an appendix), the personnel interviewed, processes observed, evidence examined and meetings of the review team at intervals during the review visit. It will also mention the review team's satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the arrangements made to facilitate the conduct of the review visit in a cost effective manner. The degree of commitment of the Faculty to openness, transparency, communications and logistical support could be recorded in this section.

Section 4 - Overview of the Faculty's Approach to Quality and Standards
This section will present the review team's observations on the overall approach of the University/Faculty to quality assurance and management. It should state whether the Faculty has a well-established Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) that works in liaison with the University's/HEIs Internal Quality Assurance Unit (IQAU) in

accordance with the Internal Quality Assurance Manual (2013) of the UGC and the IQA circular of 2015.

Comment will be made as to whether internal quality assurance is an ongoing process with best practices built into the day to day routine activities, thus ensuring that the quality culture is well entrenched within the Faculty/Institute.

This section will describe the key features of the Faculty's approach to quality assurance and its capacity to implement measures to remedy weaknesses and seek quality improvement. This section could include the review team's impression of the Faculty's commitment towards quality enhancement and excellence.

Section 5 - Judgment on the Six Criteria of Programme Review

This section will present the review team's judgment of the level of attainment of quality under each of the eight criteria of the study programme. Standard-wise scores and raw criterion-wise scores will be estimated based on the scoring system given in chapter 3. Actual criterion-wise scores for each criterion based on the allocated weightage will be calculated using the formula given in Box 1 in chapter 3. The sum of the six actual criterion-wise scores will be converted to a percentage score for the study programme. In this section of the report, the above values should be presented in tabulated form using Table 3.4. The review team should provide its observations on the strengths and weaknesses of each criterion and make recommendations for enhancement of quality.

Section 6 - Grading of Overall Performance of the programme

This will set out the review team's assessment of the level of accomplishment of quality expected of an academic programme based on the grading of overall performance under the categories of Grade A,B,C, or D as indicated in Chapter 3 under Procedure for Use of Standards for Assessment of Performance of the Programme of Study. Table 3.4 from Chapter 3 is reproduced below for convenience of the reader and members of the review team.

Table 3.4. Grading of Overall Performance of a Study Programme

Expected number of criteria with weighted minimum score	*Overall University score %*	*Grade*
6 (Six)	*≥ 80*	*A*
	70 – 79	*B*
	60 – 69	*C*
	< 60	*D*
5 (Five)	*≥ 70*	*B*
	60 – 69	*C*

	< 60	*D*
4 (Four)	≥ 60	*C*
	< 60	*D*
3 (Three) or less	Irrespective of University score	*D*

Section 7 - Commendations and Recommendations

This section will list the commendations on excellence such as the Faculty's policy and procedures in programme management; human and physical resources; programme design and development; course design and development; teaching and learning; learning environment and learner support; student assessment and awards; and healthy and innovative practices. This list is not all inclusive and any comments on quality pertaining to excellence in programme development and delivery could be included under commendations. This section will also make recommendations for remedial actions needed to bring about quality enhancement leading to excellence.

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.

6.5 Compilation of the PRR

The review chair will take the responsibility for preparing the report for submission to the QAAC. The chair will discuss the review findings with other members of the review team and request them to undertake writing different sections of the report. The Chair will assemble the different sections and compile and edit the final comprehensive draft report agreed to by the team. The final draft report should not exceed 6000 words.

6.6 Procedure for Submission of the Report

The chair of the review team will submit the draft report to the QAC. The QAC will send a copy of the draft report to the Faculty/Institute concerned for observations and comments.

6.6.1 Request for Discussion

The review team would have given an indication of its conclusions at the final meeting held after the review visit, with the Dean of the Faculty, Chairpersons of the IQAU and IQAC, Heads of Departments and other relevant senior academic staff responsible for the programme. This meeting would have given the Faculty/ Department an opportunity to sort out any factual errors and misinterpretations made by the review team. However, on receiving the draft report from the QAC, the university may ask for a further discussion with the review team about the contents of the report, prior to publication. The university should notify the QAC of its wish to take up this opportunity within two weeks of receipt of the first draft of the report, highlighting the particular areas it wishes to discuss.

The meeting to discuss any clarifications should take place within six weeks of the university making the request. The meeting should be chaired by a member of the QAC. The chair of the meeting should not be a member of the university concerned, nor should he or she have any other close links with it. Detailed notes of the meeting should be taken by a representative of the QAC. Others present at the meeting will be members of the review team (all if possible, but at least two), and representatives chosen by the university, who are likely to be staff who prepared the SER and those who participated in the review visit.The discussion will be for the purpose of clarifying the veracity of one or more of the statements in the draft report and deciding on the need for making necessary changes.

Based on the outcome of the discussions and decisions arrived at during the meeting, the final draft report will be prepared by the Chair of the Review Team and submitted to the QAC. It will then be published on the UGC website with the consent of the Faculty/Institute. Follow up actions by the Faculty/Institute, the University/ HEI, the UGC and the MoHE are dealt with in Part I, Chapter 1.

Decision making by the QAC

The Programme Review Report by the review team is an important input to the quality assurance decisions of the Council. Review Team's assessment is the basis for the QAC's decision making.

Appendix

1) Template for Section 3 of the Self-Evaluation Report

It is suggested that the SER writers will use the following template in tabular form when compiling the eight sub-sections of Section 3 on "Compliance with the Criteria and Standards" of the SER as described under 4.3 of this Manual. As recommended therein, for each criterion, a separate table should be used, so that the Section will comprise of eight tables. It will be more convenient to use the landscape layout for this section

Criterion No.			
Standard	**Claim of the degree of internalization of Best Practices and level of achievement of Standards**	**Documentary Evidence to Support the Claim**	**Code No. of the Evidence Document**
Mention the standard and its number as stated in the first column of the Tables in Section 3.2 of the Manual, pp. 35-78).	*Describe degree of internalization of Best Practices and level of achievement of Standards (Compliance with the 08 Criteria mentioned in the second column of the Tables in Section 3.2 of the Manual, pp. 35-78).*	*(Mention the titles of all documents that you will produce for the Review Team to substantiate the claims you have mentioned in Column 2. Examples of Evidence are mentioned in the third Column of the Tables in Section 3.2 of the Manual, pp. 35-78).*	*(Mention the code No. you have given to each document mentioned in the third Column of this Table.*
A criterion-wise summary statement on how the programme has complied with standards relevant to the respective Criterion			

An example for Standard 1, under Study Programme Management is given overleaf

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1) Sample for Criterion 1, Standard 1.3

Criterion 1. Programme Management			
Standard	**Claim of the degree of internalization of Best Practices and level of achievement of Standards**	**Documentary Evidence to Support the Claim**	**Code No. of the Document**
1.3 The Faculty maintains regular communication with students and staff …	Regular communication with students and staff is maintained through; (a) making provision for two student representatives to attend the meetings of the Faculty Board; (b) Students" Handbook; (c) posting of printed notices on notice boards; (d) university web site; and (e) public print and electronic media	Minutes of the meetings of the Faculty Board; Students" Handbooks; samples of printed notices displayed in the past; hard copies of notices posted on the website of the HEI; samples of /or links to notices published in the print and electronic media	3. FB/Hum/2013/3 4. FB/Hum/2013/4 8. FB/Hum/2013/8 11. SHB/2014 12. SHB/2015 26. Notice/14/9 26. Notice/15/3 15. Web/March/3 23. Paper Advert/ Daily News 2014/4/18 27. TV/ITN/News/ 2013/6/
Summary of how the Study Programme has internalized the Best Practices under the Criteria No. 1			

Glossary

Term	Definition
Academic calendar	the schedule of planned events of an institution for the academic year giving details such as scheduled dates of re-opening for the academic year, commencement of semesters, holidays, examinations, release of results, convocation, etc
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 standards	the level of achievement a student has to reach to gain an academic award.
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	the obligation to demonstrate and take responsibility for performance in the light of agreed expectations
Accreditation	formal process of enquiry against a set of agreed criteria and standards/benchmarks, undertaken by a formally constituted body and will lead, if successful, granting a formal status (i.e., an accredited institution or accredited programme or accredited degree).
Action plan	description of specific activities related to short and long term strategic objectives including outcomes and outputs with detailed roadmap, planned milestones or key performance indicators, details of resource commitments and time lines.
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 analyze, synthesize, and evaluate through projects, presentations,

	experiments, simulations, internships, practicum, independent study projects, peer teaching, role playing, or written documents.
Activities	are questions or tasks designed to help learners to think for themselves, come up with explanations/solutions, sort out the features of an argument, draw inferences, engage in controversy and relate their own ideas and inferences to a topic. Sometimes called self-assessment questions (SAQ), in-text questions, or adjunct aids.
Advance organizer	is built into the beginning of a piece of self-instructional material to give learners a general idea of what is to follow and to help organize their learning.
Appeal mechanism	documented procedure for dealing with challenges to a rule or decision, or for reviewing a judgement or decision made on behalf of the institution. This also includes the constitution, roles, responsibilities and ethical practices of the committees or authority established for the purpose.
Assessment	Is 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.
Assignments	student-centred learning exercises given during a course at pre-determined intervals and according to defined criteria to achieve in fulfillment of assessment requirements. Work submitted by the learners may be assessed and feedback given.
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.
Benchmarking	measurement of the quality of an organization's policies, products, programs, strategies, etc., and their comparison with standard measurements, or similar measurements of its peers.
Blended learning	a formal education program in which a student learns at least in part through delivery of content and instruction via digital and online media with some element of student control over time, place, path, or pace.

Bridging course	A course designed for learners who have difficulty in coping up with the transition to a higher level of study. The bridging course is often of a short duration and is intended to bridge the gap between an existing level of competence and the level required for effective study at the higher level.
Code of conduct	expectations of behaviour mutually agreed upon by the institution and its constituent members.
Collaboration	the process by which people/organizations 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.
Community engagement	a working relationship between an institution and one or more community groups to help both to understand and work together to meet the needs in a mutually beneficial manner.
Competencies	ability to apply to practical situations the essential principles and techniques of a particular subject.
Compliance	a state of being in accordance with established guidelines, specifications, requirements or legislation.
Constituencies	key branches/departments/units/entities in an institution which need act together in coherent and complementary manner
Continuous improvement	a management process whereby the procedures, services, content, material, teaching/learning processes of study programmes are constantly evaluated in the light of their efficiency, effectiveness and flexibility, and appropriate and timely improvements are made on a continual basis to achieve the desired benchmark/ excellence.
Continuous quality improvement	a philosophy and process for analyzing 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 enrollment for the course/programme who have satisfactorily completed the prescribed requirements of a given course/programme
Course development	a specified and quality assured process that combines the elements of course formulation and approval, academic content writing, assessment design, instructional design, integration of media content, media production and course material production
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	a concise description of a course with respect to its aims(s), objectives, intended learning outcomes, volume of learning in terms of credits, course contents/synopsis, teaching and learning methods, assessment procedures, learner support available, recommended reading material, including the information on the programme for which the course is prescribed, department responsible for offering it, and prior-learning requirements.
Credit	a unit used in the expression and calculation of the academic value/volume of learning of the courses taken 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 SLQF norms 1 credit is equivalent to 50 notional hours.
Credit transfer	procedure of granting credit to a student for educational experiences or courses undertaken at another institution. This not only facilitates smooth transfer of learners from one programme to another and from one institution to another nationally but also enables transnational mobility.
Criterion	a principle by which something may be judged or decided.
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 and sets norms and standards for evolving and sustaining the institutional culture.

Curriculum	The total planned structure of knowledge, skills, and attitudes, and educational experiences that make up a programme of study that enable the learners to achieve the intended learning outcomes of the programme of study
Data base	A collection of data fundamental to an operation , organized in some pre-defined structure , typically held on a computer
Developmental testing	field trial or pilot trying out of draft course material with a small group of learners in the hope of developing improving those materials for the benefit of the learners
Differently abled learners	learners who have a physical or mental impairment which effect their ability to carry out 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. Distance education requires structured planning, well-designed courses, special instructional techniques and methods of communication by electronic and other technology, as well as specific organizational 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.
Drop out	a term used for learners who cease to be active in a particular programme/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	the use of technology to improve teaching and learning
Equity in education	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 organization.

Evaluation	a periodic assessment of the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness impact and/or sustainability of an activity or intervention.
Experiential learning	learning acquired through workplace or other previous experience
Extension Programmes /courses	educational training/courses provided by HEIs to individuals who are not enrolled as regular students.
External quality Assurance (EQA)	assessment performed by an organization external to the institution to assess the status and standards of operation of the institution or its programmes to see whether it meets the pre-determined standards/benchmarks
Face-to-face interaction	interaction between two individuals or groups in the same physical space
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.
Feedback mechanism	systems for obtaining information from participants in a process that contributes to the assessment of its quality and effectiveness.
Formative assessment	assessment of learning that is carried out during a course to provide feedback to students.
Formative evaluation	evaluation that occurs while a project or course is in progress, with the aim of identifying short-comings in the course.
Generic skills	skills that can be applied across a variety of subject domains; 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 in the future which will indicate significant progress towards achieving the institutional mission. A goal should be specific, measurable, critical for success and benchmarked.
Governance	managing an organization based on pre-determined policy, rules, regulations and standards; providing leadership and standards, managing and coordinating the use of physical and human resources, effecting procedures and processes,

	in a transparent and efficient manner to successfully achieve the vision of the organization.
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, 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.
Independent learning	instructional system in which learners are encouraged to carry out their studies by themselves beyond the classroom instruction so as to prepare them for lifelong learning.
Independent study	mode of learning in which learners work through their study materials independently of other learners.
Induction/ Orientation programme	the process by which learners are introduced to a new organization/ environment; the learners are informed of their responsibilities, commitments, the study programme, facilities provided, expected conduct and behavior, etc.
Innovation	new knowledge/ technique/ tool generated through experimentation that will add value to product/tool/techniques or improve efficiency of a process/techniques/service.
Inputs	products, services and prepared materials used to produce the desired outcomes/outputs.
Institutionalization	formalization or internalization or adoption of a practice/ guidelines/ values/ norms which would add value to the institutional procedures and practices.
Instructional design	process of designing instructional materials in a way that helps learners to engage in learning effectively.
Instructional package	all essential instructions, guidelines, study materials of a course.
Interactive learning	learning that results from the two-way communication

	between tutor and the learner, between learners, and between the learner and the learning materials. the interactivity of the learning can be assessed in terms of the learner's interaction with the medium of delivery, the level and immediacy of the feedback the medium itself provides , the extent to which the medium will accommodate the learner's own input and direction and the extent to which learner's interact with the tutor and with each other via a given medium.
Intellectual Property Rights (IPR)	temporary grants of monopoly intended to give economic incentives for innovative and creative activity. IPR exist in the forms of patent, copyrights and trademarks.
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 pre-determined standards.
Internal review	internal assessment or review process commissioned regularly by HEIs to assure internalization of best practices and achieving the standards/benchmarks with respect to its governance and management, and study programmes and allied activities
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
Learner profile	a description of an average potential learner or group of learners based upon knowledge of appropriate learner characteristics
Learning portfolio	a representative collection of a learner's work that promotes self-assessment, awareness and continuous improvement
Learner support	a supportive network of preparatory courses, skill development opportunities, personal and academic counselling to meet learners needs through a flexible approach to resources including individualized support from the teacher/facilitator.
Learner support services	physical and academic facilities made available to learners to enable every individual to achieve the stated learning outcomes through online support, tutor support, library and information services, laboratories and administrative

	support.
Learning activities	tasks designed and assigned to help learners to engage in analysis, synthesis by themselves, come up with explanations/solutions, constructively develop an argument, draw inferences, engage in critical review and relate their own ideas and experience to a topic.
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 independently and with a virtual cohort of learners.
Learning Management System (LMS)	a software application for the administration, documentation, tracking, reporting and delivery of electronic educational technology (also called e-learning) courses or training programs. Typically, a learning management system provides an instructor with a way to create and deliver content, monitor student participation, and assess student performance.
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 by learning to enhance the quality of life.
Lifelong learning skills	knowledge and skills which improve learners" competence and commitment at the time of learning and facilitate continuous learning throughout life.
Management Information System (MIS)	a computerized integrated information collection, collation, analysis and reporting system to support institutional management and decision making processes.
Market research	fact finding activities undertaken by an institution/individual to determine the demand for its programmes/ services/products

Mission	the overall function or purpose of an institution.
Module	a separate and coherent block of learning; a self-contained, formally structured unit of a programme of study.
Modular curricula	courses offered in units which are complete in themselves
Monitoring	A management tool 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.
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.
Open access	A way of providing learning opportunities that implies a lack of formal entry requirements, pre requisite credentials or an entrance requirement
Open learning	An educational philosophy that also emphasizes giving learns choice about media, place of study, support mechanisms and entry and exit points.
Outcome-based Education	an educational theory that bases teaching learning and assessment components of an educational system around intended outcomes to ensure achievement of the desired learning outcomes by every student at the end of the educational experience; a process that involves the restructuring of curriculum, assessment and reporting practices in education to reflect the achievement of high order learning and mastery rather than the accumulation of course credits" (Tucker, 2004).
Open and Distance Learning	a way of providing learning opportunities characterized 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 specialized division of labour in the production and delivery of courses.

Open learning resources	educational resources offered freely and openly for anyone to use and under some licenses to re-mix, improve and re-distribute
Open source software	A licensing model for software that gives free access to the source code of the software to allow interested parties to modify or contribute to the software as they see fit.
Organizational chart / Organogram	a diagram that shows the structure of an organization and the relationships and relative ranks of its parts and positions/jobs
Organizational structure	a framework that shows the divisions of an organization and reveals vertical responsibilities and horizontal linkages, and may be represented by an organization 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.
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 Institution community. Outreach is a one-way process in which the Institution is the provider either on a gratis basis or with an associated charge.
Outreach activities	a systematic attempt to provide services beyond the conventional limits of institutional provision to particular 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 and implementation processes.
Partner institutions/organizations	key institutions/organizations 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 Institution and another major provider that engenders cooperation for the benefit of both parties and the student population at large.

Peers	Are mostly colleagues from other universities/HEIs. They are external but work in a similar environment and have specific professional expertise and knowledge of the evaluated subject. They are independent and "persons of equal standing" with the persons whose performance is being reviewed.
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 each individual.
Peer review	Is a form of external evaluation with the aim of supporting the reviewed educational institution in its quality assurance and quality development efforts.
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, and training needs to enhance performance.
Performance indicators	criteria used by educational institutions in self-evaluation and by external evaluators when judging the quality of educational provision.
Policy	a statement of principles or intentions which serve as continuing guidelines for management in accomplishing the institution"s mission, goals and objectives.
Pre-requisites	For a lesson or course are the knowledge, skills, relevant experience, and perhaps attitudes the teacher would like the learners to have before starting on some particular learning experience.
Print media	printed materials, as distinguished from broadcast or electronically transmitted communications
Prior learning	what has been learnt by an individual prior to enrollment 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 characterized by a set of specific inputs and activities to achieve specific outputs/tasks.
Programme	structured teaching and learning opportunities which lead to an award; Refers to all activities that engage students in learning.

Programme of study	a stand- alone approved curriculum followed by a student , which contributes to a qualification of a degree awarding body.
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.
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 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 an other allied activities and provisions comply with predefined quality dimensions (i.e. criteria, best practices and standards).
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.

Reflective practice	thoughtfully considering one's own experiences in applying knowledge and / or skills to practice.
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/ products/ services
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	is an evaluation carried out by the institutions themselves. It is an important approach for fostering quality assurance and quality enhancement at an institutional level.
Self-Evaluation Report (SER)	a document prepared by the Faculty/ Institute providing a description and analysis with supporting evidence of the effectiveness with which the Faculty/Institute discharges its responsibility for academic standards and adherence to good practices in ensuring the quality of the study programme
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
Standards	measurable indicators that provide the basis of comparison for making judgements concerning the performance of an instructional activity, programme or institution

Standard Operational Procedures	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 perquisites for ensuring good governance and management.
Strategic plan	a specific and action-oriented, medium or long-term plan of the Institution/HEI for making progress towards achieving a set of institutional goals as dictated by its mission and vision
Student Charter	Student Charter sets out the general principles of the partnership between students, the HEI. It applies to all registered students of the HEI following taught or research programmes, whether studying on or off campus; student charter outlines values, principles, functions, responsibilities of the institution towards students and the students responsibilities and codes of practices, and also the consequences of breach disciplines
Student-centred learning	methods of teaching that shifts the focus of instruction from the teacher to the student; also known as learner-centered education; aims to develop learner autonomy and independence by putting responsibility for the learning path in the hands of students; focuses on skills and practices that enable lifelong learning and independent problem-solving.
Students' Feedback Analyses	gathering and analyzing feedback 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.
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 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 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
Transparency	institutional processes that are characterized by openness, communication and clearly assigned accountability.
Tracer Studies	Information gathering methods/ studies conducted by an HEI to evaluate the relevance of their educational programmes in terms of employability and professional development of its graduates; obtain information about the state of employment of former graduates, labour market signals, professional success for retrospective evaluation of study programmes, curricular development, continuing education etc.
Triangulation	the approach of including different methods and sources in collection of evidence contributing to the quality of the evaluation in terms of objectivity, reliability, and validity. Soliciting different points of view from different stakeholders during the peer visit will enable the peers to gain a more accurate and complete picture.
Tutoring	an interactive approach to disseminating knowledge that helps students to improve their learning in order to promote empowerment and independent learning process of confirming the appropriateness of something;
Validation	determination of the effectiveness of instructional materials or system by the use of appropriate summative evaluation techniques.
Virtual Learning Environment (VLE)	a Web-based platform for the digital aspects of courses of study, usually within educational institutions. VLE is a system for delivering learning materials to students via the web. These systems include assessment, student tracking, and collaboration and communication tools. This is also defined as 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. This is also referred as LMS
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.

About the Author

Uma Coomaraswamy is a Professor Emeritus of Botany, former Vice-Chancellor of The Open University of Sri Lanka (OUSL). She holds a BSc Degree from the University of Ceylon and a PhD from the University of London, UK. She served the University of Colombo (1965-1981), Eastern University, Sri Lanka (1982-1991) and The Open University of Sri Lanka (1991-2006,), in several capacities as senior administrator, academic, and researcher with heavy involvement in outreach activities. After retirement from university service she served as a national consultant on quality assurance (QA) in the ADB Distance Education Modernization Project (DEMP, 2006-2009) during which period she produced QA tools, systems and processes for distance higher education in Sri Lanka and she spearheaded the initiative of the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) to make the national QA tools produced by DEMP more generic for use by member states of the Commonwealth and published by COL as Quality Assurance Toolkit for Distance Higher Education: Institutions and Programmes in 2009 which is being used by several commonwealth countries in their QA efforts. She has also served as a resource person in the Higher Education for the Twenty First Century (HETC) of the World Bank and as a member of the authors of quality assurance manuals for the External Degree Programmes and for review of Conventional universities published by UGC and HETC.

In the context of ODL she has served as a member of the Commonwealth of Learning Editorial Advisory Group for the series "World review of distance education and open learning" published as 6 volumes by the Common Wealth of Learning (COL). External Reviewer of QA for COL RIM model of quality assurance for Sri Lanka and South Asian Countries; COL Consultant for developing national policies for ODL in Sri Lanka and Maldives; COL Consultant for the Lifelong Learning for Farmers Project implemented by some universities in Sri Lanka and author of chapters on QA for distance learning in various publications.

Currently she serves as the Director of the UGC Centre for Gender Equity/Equality; Advisor/ UGC Standing Committee on Quality Assurance; Member, UGC Standing Committee on Gender Equity/Equality.