



香港學術及職業資歷評審局
Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of
Academic & Vocational Qualifications

**SUPPLEMENTARY GUIDELINES ON
RE-INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW
OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING
OPERATORS
WITH ACCREDITATION STATUS**

January 2008

1 PREAMBLE

- 1.1 These Supplementary Guidelines are intended to help education and training operators with institutional review accreditation status to better understand the process in a re-institutional review (re-IR) exercise so as to prepare a relevant submission for accreditation by the Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications (HKCAAVQ). They should be read in conjunction with the *HKCAAVQ Guidelines on Institutional Review, Programme Validation and Revalidation* and / or any other relevant guidelines attached to the signed Agreement concerned. These guidelines aim to give an overview on the policies, procedures and processes of HKCAAVQ accreditation at institutional and programme levels. They are by no means exhaustive.
- 1.2 These Supplementary Guidelines may be modified from time to time. Whilst the HKCAAVQ endeavours to ensure the accuracy of the information contained herein, the HKCAAVQ reserves the right to delete, suspend or edit all information at any time in its absolute discretion without giving any prior notice. To obtain the most up-to-date information, users may look up the electronic version of these Supplementary Guidelines from the homepage of HKCAAVQ at www.hkcaavq.edu.hk.
- 1.3 Unless otherwise stipulated herein, these Supplementary Guidelines supersede any prior guidance notes on re-IR that the HKCAAVQ and / or its predecessor HKCAA has published or issued previously.

2 PURPOSES OF RE-IR

- 2.1 The re-IR process is a review of the academic and general standards of an operator which has been granted an IR accreditation status. The review is to ascertain whether the justifications for the previous IR accreditation status still subsist and to evaluate changes and / or progress made thereafter to see whether the IR status can continuously be granted for the current exercise. The process involves a major in-depth review of the actual operation of the operator after it has obtained the IR status for the approved validity period. In addition to ascertaining the academic and general standards of the operator as outlined in the *HKCAAVQ Guidelines on Institutional Review, Programme Validation and Revalidation* and / or any other relevant guidelines attached to

the signed Agreement concerned, the re-IR process will involve evaluation and assessment of the following aspects of an operator, the findings of which will lead to a decision as to whether the institution should be reaccredited for a specified period within the stated scope(s) and level(s) of educational provision or for a specified period with changes in its scope(s) and / or level(s) as defined in the terms of reference for the review upon the expiry of the current IR status:

- i) whether the operator as accredited has been effectively and successfully delivering its educational mission, purposes and objectives as planned;
- ii) whether all the previously expressed aspirations and ambitions have been fulfilled;
- iii) whether the pre-conditions (or conditions) and requirements stipulated by the HKCAAVQ (and / or the HKCAA), if any, in the last institutional review report have continuously been fulfilled;
- iv) whether the recommendations in the last institutional review report have been addressed and if not the rationale for not following them through;
- v) how the operator has monitored and managed the institution and maintained its standards at an appropriate level compared with local and internationally recognised standards (including but not limited to those of the Hong Kong Qualifications Framework as and when appropriate); and
- vi) whether all necessary human, financial and physical resources have been provided and at the appropriate level for the development of the operator's programme(s) accredited by the HKCAAVQ at the required standards.

3 PROCESS OF RE-IR

- 3.1 A validity period as well as the scope(s) and / or level(s) of educational provision is specified when an operator is granted IR accreditation status. For the accreditation status of the operator to continue, a successful re-IR exercise before the expiry of the current validity period is required.

- 3.2 In the penultimate year of the expiry of the validity period of the IR status, the operator should discuss with the HKCAAVQ a time schedule for re-IR so that it has sufficient time for self-evaluation and preparation of the re-IR submission.
- 3.3 In the process of a re-IR exercise, the operator may wish to introduce some substantial changes. All these substantial changes require prior HKCAAVQ approval. If the proposed timing for implementing the changes fit well with the cycle of re-IR exercise, the re-IR exercise will be an opportune occasion for the HKCAAVQ to consider the these proposed changes and make a decision as to whether these changes should be approved and to take effect in the new validity period of the re-IR status, if so granted (Please refer also to Paragraph 5 on substantial changes).
- 3.4 The re-IR exercise will be conducted according to the HKCAAVQ accreditation criteria of an institutional review as well as aspects of concern related to re-IR as stipulated in Paragraph 2 above. During the on-site visit, the re-IR panel will expect to meet with a good representation of all stakeholders including but not limited to representatives from the governing bodies, the senior management, the teaching and student support staff, external advisers, external examiners, employers, the students, the graduates and any other appropriate personnel. The purpose of the meetings is to enable the Panel to gauge how well the institution has been managed, monitored and quality assured so as to understand the quality of its academic provision, the students' learning experience as well as its general standards. The Panel will also examine a well-balanced and representational sample of quantitative and qualitative data including financial statements and budgets, strategic and action plans, board and committee papers and minutes, resources plans, students' work and quality assurance reports such that the panel can gain a good insight into the extent to which the institution has met its aims and educational objectives and deliver the stipulated learning outcomes. The Panel will also ascertain from the information provided for evidence to prove the claim.

4 CRITERIA OF RE-IR

- 4.1 The HKCAAVQ would start from the same set of criteria as that applied to an institutional review exercise with due regard to the purpose of the re-IR as given in Paragraph 2 above.
- 4.2 **The operator concerned should make reference to ANNEXES 1 and 3 of the *HKCAAVQ Guidelines on Institutional Review, Programme Validation and Revalidation in preparing the re-IR submission*.** The re-IR submission should be supplemented with any other relevant information which may provide necessary background information for the Panel to understand the operation since the last accreditation exercise as well as the extent to which the operator has achieved its stated aims and purposes, the value and currency of its educational provision, the problems encountered, corresponding improvements / changes made, etc. In order for the Panel to have an overall understanding of the full spectrum of educational provision of the institution under review, it is necessary for data on admissions, enrolments, attrition, progression and graduation of all programmes / courses offered by the operator, irrespective of whether they are accredited by the HKCAAVQ, to be provided. Summaries of course end evaluation completed by students and exit questionnaires completed by graduates will also be useful information for the Panel's review.
- 4.3 If there had been substantial changes at institutional level (see para 5) introduced during the validity period or if there were any intended institutional changes for the coming years, such changes should be highlighted in the document in separate identifiable paragraphs for easy reference by the Panel.

5 SUBSTANTIAL CHANGE

- 5.1 Examples of substantial changes are given below:
- i) a change in the corporate governance and management & institutional structure;
 - ii) changes in the financial model which may affect the financial viability and sustainability of the provider;
 - iii) changes in the academic model which may be relevant to the fundamental educational philosophy and principles of the provider, mode of attendance or the normative length of programmes at various levels;
 - iv) changes to the fundamental structure or core content of the

- programme;
- v) significant reduction in the provision of resources (staff, equipment or facility).
- vi) Changes in its student support policy & services and scholarly activities affecting the sustainable operation of the institution in the areas of its educational provision at the approved level(s) of operation.

5.2 Additional information to be submitted for the processing of such changes include details and rationale of the proposed changes, the implications of the changes to overall institutional management, learning outcomes, resource support and the measures/additional resources to implement the changes as well as the quality assurance process to underpin the changes and to maintain the academic and general standards of the institution. Relevant discussion papers, minutes of meetings of appropriate committees and boards should also be provided.

6 OUTCOME OF RE-IR

6.1 The outcome of the re-IR can be as follows:

- i) The operator may be granted continued approval for the accreditation status pertaining to the scope and level as defined in the terms of reference of the Re-IR; or
- ii) The accreditation status pertaining to the scope and level as defined in the terms of reference of the review may be approved subject to the fulfillment of certain pre-conditions and/or requirements by the stipulated deadline(s); or
- iii) The operator should not be granted continued approval for the accreditation status pertaining to the scope and level as defined in the terms of reference of the review.