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

Review of Accreditation Standards and Criteria

Consultation Document | May 2017

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1. Foreword

1.1 In September 2015, HKCAAVQ embarked on a review (the Review) of its accreditation standards and criteria for quality assurance (QA) of qualifications seeking recognition under the Hong Kong Qualifications Framework (QF), as well as the accreditation standards and criteria for conducting Institutional Review for the purpose of seeking Cap. 320 registration. The background and timeline of the Review can be found in a dedicated webpage of HKCAAVQ (www.hkcaavq.edu.hk/en/review-of-standards). The Review not only aims at ensuring that the accreditation standards and criteria, that cover both higher education and vocational and professional education and training, are fit for purpose for an increasingly wide diversity of operators and learning programmes, but also that the revised accreditation standards and criteria are as 'future-proofed' as possible to avoid the need for frequent updates.

1.2 The drafting of the revisions to the accreditation standards has been informed by an extensive range of research activities. These research activities included desktop research, focus group meetings, case studies, comparisons with accreditation standards of other QA agencies, and analysis of internal accreditation information. Both quantitative and qualitative information has been collected and analysed to provide a comprehensive picture of contemporary quality assurance theory and practice, as well as summarising the experience of HKCAAVQ as an Accreditation Authority since the launch of QF in 2008. In summary, the research pointed to the need to provide more specific guidance on the accreditation standards, while maintaining a suitable degree of flexibility to cope with the diverse range of operators and learning programmes.

1.3 The Review has now entered its formal consultation phase running from May to August 2017. The primary targets of the consultation are accredited operators, specialists and professional staff of HKCAAVQ. Invitations have been sent to all HKCAAVQ's accredited operators and specialists, while the general public has access to the consultation through HKCAAVQ's website. Invitations are also extended to other relevant parties such as ITACs, professional bodies, QAC of the UGC, and experienced quality assurance experts, even though they are not direct users of HKCAAVQ accreditation services.

2. The Consultation

2.1   This Consultation Document forms the basis of the formal consultation. The main body of the Consultation Document has two parts. Part A is an Issues Paper and Part B contains draft revisions to the accreditation standards.

Part A: Issues Paper

2.2   The Issues Paper summarises the broad issues identified in the research phase of the Review. Based on these broad issues, the Issues Paper further explains the proposed directions of change, the conceptual framework of HKCAAVQ's Four-stage QA Process, and the main considerations which have driven the development of the draft revisions to the accreditation standards and criteria. These considerations necessitated the adoption of a new structure for presenting the draft accreditation standards and criteria.

Part B: Draft Revisions to Accreditation Standards

2.3   Guided by the proposed directions of change, the accreditation standards have been reviewed. The draft revisions to the accreditation standards, adopting a new presentation format, can be found in Part B of the Consultation Document.

2.4   The formal consultation has three channels for collecting feedback. There is an online survey with specific questions on Part A and Part B of the Consultation Document. Written submissions are invited to collect feedback in a free-text format. Face-to-face sessions are organised to collect views and comments that require discussion. These channels serve different purposes and are designed to collect different types of information. **To assist us in safeguarding and enhancing the quality of education and training in Hong Kong, we sincerely invite you to share with us your views and comments on the issues and draft revisions of the accreditation standards through one or more of the above channels.**

2.5   A Taskforce is set up by the Council of HKCAAVQ for monitoring the direction, progress and outputs of the Review. It comprises overseas and local Council Members, and the Executive Director. After the formal consultation, the Taskforce will consider the responses and comments, for further deliberation by the Council before finalising the revised accreditation standards and criteria.

2.6   Detailed Information about the consultation can be found in Review webpage. All information collected in the consultation will be used only for the purpose of the Review and remains confidential. If you have any questions regarding the Review or the consultation, please contact Ms. Sarah Kwong of HKCAAVQ at 3658 0225, review@hkcaavq.edu.hk.

<div align="right">Taskforce of the Review of Standards</div>

List of Abbreviations

AA	Accreditation Authority
ATS	Award Titles Scheme
Cap. 320	Post Secondary Colleges Ordinance
Cap. 592	Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications Ordinance (AAVQO)
CAT	Credit Accumulation and Transfer
GLD	Generic Level Descriptors
HD	Higher Diploma
HKCAAVQ	Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications
IE	Initial Evaluation
IR	Institutional Review
LPA	Learning Programme Accreditation
NLP	Non-local Learning Programmes
PAA	Programme Area Accreditation
PILOs	Programme Intended Learning Outcomes
PR	Periodic Review
the Process	Four-stage Quality Assurance Process
QA	Quality Assurance
QF	Hong Kong Qualifications Framework
Re-LPA	Learning Programme Re-Accreditation
SCS	Specification of Competency Standards
SGC	Specification of Generic (Foundation) Competencies

Glossary

For a glossary of the terms used in this document, please visit
http://www.hkcaavq.edu.hk/files/review-of-standards/documents_or_information/glossary_e.pdf.

Part A – Issues Paper

A1. Broad Issues of Considerations

A-1.1 Starting from a number of research themes, the research activities identified fourteen broad issues that warrant consideration for the development of the draft accreditation standards. These fourteen broad issues can be found below:

Research Theme	Issue Statement
Presentation of Standards	1. More context-sensitive guidance should be provided to facilitate consistent interpretation and application of standards (and criteria).
	2. To strengthen a systematic approach of applying GLD in accreditation.
New Forms of Delivery	3. More guidance should be provided to facilitate consistent interpretation and application of standards (and criteria) in the context of online or blended delivery.
	4. To review the neutrality of standards with respect to operating models or delivery modes.
Measuring Outcomes	5. The standards (and criteria) should articulate the expectations in relation to learner-centered approach and outcome-based education, at both institutional and programme level.
	6. The standards should be able to encourage progressive demonstration of effective implementation of OBE through the Four-stage QA Process, from programme to institutional level.
Maturity of Operators	7. The standards (and criteria) should articulate a clear and progressive expectation of moving from compliance to enhancement, beyond meeting the threshold standards.
	8. There should be some minimum requirements for ensuring that an accredited operator is capable of self-improvement.
Institutional vs. Programme Accreditation	9. To rationalise and articulate the focuses of different accreditation exercises within the Four-stage QA Process.
LPA vs. Re-LPA	10. To develop re-LPA standards with a focus on effectiveness of implementation, changes and improvements.
Disclosure of information	11. To consider to what extent information disclosure is relevant in different stages of the Four-stage QA Process.
Academic vs. VPET Accreditation	12. To better articulate how different evidence can be used to demonstrate meeting the same standards with respect to the nature of operators and/or programmes.
CAT and VPET Developments	13. More contextual guidance should be provided to facilitate shared understanding of work-based, workplace, non-formal and informal learning, and how they should be assessed in accreditation.
	14. The standards (and criteria) should articulate the expectations in relation to relevant government guidelines and policies where appropriate.

A-1.2 In addition to the above fourteen broad issues, recent accreditation experience of HKCAAVQ also highlighted the need to give adequate consideration to governance of operators.

A2. Proposed Directions of Change

A-2.1 Informed by the findings from the research phase, three overarching directions have been proposed which guided the development of the draft accreditation standards and criteria. These three key directions are:

   i.   Provide more guidance to operators and panels in applying the standards, while maintaining a suitable degree of flexibility to address the diversity of operators and learning programmes accredited by HKCAAVQ;

   ii. Strengthening the embodiment of outcome-based accreditation in the accreditation standards and criteria; and

   iii. Encourage the development of competence of operators in effective management and continuous self-improvement.

A-2.2 HKCAAVQ's current accreditation standards have a simple structure that does not lend itself to easily pursuing the above directions. It is therefore considered necessary to develop a new structure that can better cope with the diversity of operators and learning programmes in following these directions. This is supported by the observation that accreditation standards from other QA agencies seldom use such a simple structure. The development of the new structure has been driven by a number of underlying principles:

   - **Coherence** – Each stage in the Process has a purpose in its own right but contributes to the overall philosophy of the Process. The different standards under a stage work together to serve the purpose. The philosophy of the Process is elaborated in the next section.
   - **Consistency** – Ensure consistent interpretation, implementation and evaluation.
   - **Context-sensitive** – HKCAAVQ's portfolio covers a diverse range of operators and learning programmes. The standards must be able to accommodate such diversity.

A-2.3 The next section elaborates on a conceptual framework for understanding the draft revisions to the accreditation standards and criteria, aligning with the philosophy of the Process.

A3. Philosophy of the Four-stage QA Process

A-3.1 HKCAAVQ has adopted an outcome-based approach in the design of the Process. There is a hierarchy of outcomes that are considered in the Process:

   i.   learner outcomes - learning outcomes attained by a learner after successful completion of a learning programme. Learner outcomes are reflected by assessments.

   ii. programme outcomes - performance of a learning programme in relation to its programme objectives. Programme outcomes are typically assessed by analysing information such as stakeholder's feedback and employment data.

   iii. organisational outcomes - performance of an operator in relation to achieving its vision and mission through effective governance and management. Internally, an organisation typically develops relevant performance indicators to assess its organisational outcomes. Effectiveness is a commonly used indicator in this regard.

A-3.2 These types of outcomes are connected and layered. The vision and mission of an organisation guides the design of learning programmes and the identification of learning outcomes, and the learning outcomes achieved by the learners contribute to the measurement of the effectiveness of the operator. The effectiveness of an operator hinges on whether there are processes in place to check and maintain the alignment between activities at different levels. This kind of organisational competence takes time to fully develop and HKCAAVQ requires operators to meet a threshold competence at the entry point of the Process. Moving through the Process, higher levels of competence are expected at each stage and these expectations are articulated in the accreditation standards. The different stages in the Process are illustrated below:
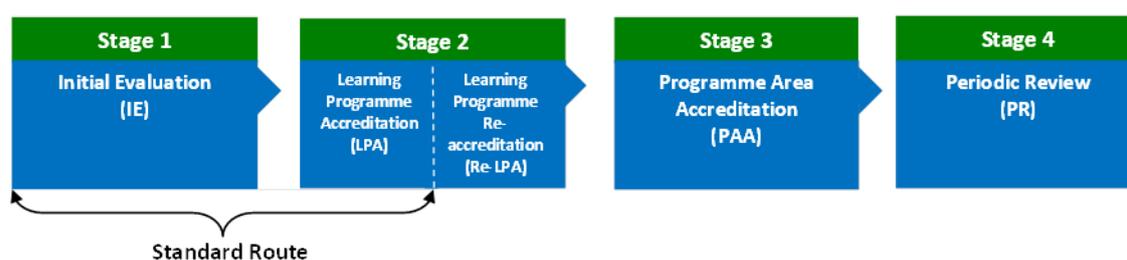

Figure 1: The Four-stage Quality Assurance Process

A-3.3 The Process, shown in Figure 1, is designed with a particular purpose for each stage to develop the capability of operators, and to recognise established track record of operators. Moving to the stage of Programme Area Accreditation (PAA) is not automatic and requires demonstration of a high level of competence of an operator in effective management and continuous self-improvement in a systematic and

information-driven manner. Therefore, accreditation by HKCAAVQ is not designed to replace internal quality assurance, but rather works in collaboration with the internal quality assurance of an operator. The following table summarised the purpose of each stage in the Process:

Stage	Purpose Statement
Initial Evaluation	To ascertain whether an operator is competent to operate learning programme(s) that meet QF standards up to a certain QF level.
Learning programme accreditation/Re-accreditation	The purpose is twofold: To ascertain whether a learning programme (proposed or accredited) meets a QF standard to achieve the claimed objectives. To ascertain whether the operator of a learning programme is competent to continuously monitor and improve the effectiveness of its programme operation to meet the claimed programme objectives.
Programme Area Accreditation	To ascertain whether an operator is competent to quality assure its learning programmes within a programme area up to a certain QF level, as demonstrated from the track record of its operation of accredited learning programmes in a particular discipline or industry area, and its capacity to enhance its organisational effectiveness to meet the educational/training objectives.
Periodic Review	To ascertain whether an operator continues to be effective to achieve its vision and mission by systematically enhancing quality of its operation by formulating and implementing actions based on evidence.

A-3.4 For a new operator, the standard route for entering the Process is a combined Initial Evaluation (IE) and the Learning Programme Accreditation (LPA) accreditation exercise. This allows an operator to demonstrate its organisational competence through actual implementation. Not every aspect of the implementation of an operator or a learning programme can be demonstrated when they are first accredited. Those aspects will be revisited in learning programme re-accreditation. Organisational policies/processes considered in the IE of an operator are generally assumed to be applicable to all the learning programmes of the operator.

A-3.5 Based on the conceptual framework, the next section provides an explanation of the new structure adopted in the development of the draft revisions to accreditation standards and criteria.

A4. The New Structure

A-4.1 In the Process, HKCAAVQ focuses on operators' organisational competence in operating and ensuring the quality of its delivery of learning programmes. The assessment of organisational competence takes into consideration the nature of the learning programme(s) that an operator offers or plans to offer. The portfolio of HKCAAVQ covers a wide range of operators and learning programmes in the education and training sectors. Given this diversity, it is not possible or desirable for HKCAAVQ to develop accreditation standards that mandate specific requirements such as specific learning outcomes, programme design or operating models. Instead, **HKCAAVQ's accreditation standards collectively set out the competence requirements that an operator must meet to demonstrate that it can achieve its objectives and deliver the expected programme learning outcomes. The standards also reflect the high expectations of the community on the quality of the education and training system in Hong Kong, as well as essential features of operators**.

A-4.2 HKCAAVQ's accreditation standards are separate from other relevant standards or guidelines promulgated by the Government and/or other authorities that may be applicable to a particular operator or learning programme undergoing accreditation. A list of such standards or guidelines can be found in Appendix I. HKCAAVQ will assess the compliance of operators with these requirements in the accreditation process, where applicable, as articulated under the relevant standards.

A-4.3 As explained in the previous section, each stage in the Process serves a different purpose. Therefore, there are different aspects of organisational competence that have to be assessed. These aspects can be ordered under several **domains of competence**. For each domain in a stage, an accreditation standard is developed to describe the level of competence required in relation to the purpose of that stage. Different stages may have the same or similar domain, for example "Organisational Quality Assurance", but the level of competence required generally increases as an operator moves through the Process. For each standard, a determination will be made as to whether the standard has been met. The standards are applicable to all operators and/or learning programmes going through the same stage of accreditation. The following table summarised the domains of competence for each stage:

Stage	Domain of Competence	
Initial Evaluation	IE-1.	Organisational Governance and Management
	IE-2.	Financial and Resources Management
	IE-3.	Organisational Staffing
	IE-4.	Organisational Quality Assurance
Learning programme accreditation/re-	LPA-1.	Programme Objectives and Learning Outcomes
	LPA-2.	Learner Admission and Selection

accreditation	LPA-3.	Programme Content and Structure
	LPA-4.	Learning, Teaching and Assessment
	LPA-5.	Programme Leadership and Staffing
	LPA-6.	Learning, Teaching and Enabling Resources
	LPA-7.	Programme Development, Review and Quality Assurance
Programme Area Accreditation	PAA-1.	Organisational Governance and Management
	PAA-2.	Strategic Planning and Development
	PAA-3.	Financial Management and Viability
	PAA-4.	Programme Area Development and Management
	PAA-5.	Organisational Quality Assurance and Enhancement
	PAA-6.	Learning, Teaching and Assessment Policies
	PAA-7.	Staffing
	PAA-8.	Programme Area Resources
Periodic Review	PR-1.	Organisational Effectiveness and Planning
	PR-2.	Organisational Leadership and Staffing
	PR-3.	Programme Area Development and Management
	PR-4.	Management of Resources and Services
	PR-5.	Quality Assurance and Enhancement

Accreditation Criteria

A-4.4 Each standard is supported by a set of criteria which sets out important considerations for determining whether a standard has been met. The criteria provide guidance to the accreditation panel, and also guidance to operators in self-evaluating the performance of their organisations and learning programmes.

A-4.5 However, the criteria listed under the standards are not intended to form a checklist, but are there to be applied within the particular context of an operator or learning programme. This allows flexibility to address diverse operating models, including collaborative provisions in the case of non-local learning programmes (NLP).

Possible Sources of Evidence

A-4.6 Organisational competence has to be substantiated via information generated in actual operation. For each standard, the possible sources of evidence are examples of documents or information that may contain evidence of actions or decisions taken. Following a self-evaluation, an operator is expected to present selected evidence (e.g. policies, mechanisms, procedures) from its own operation demonstrating how each standard is met, using a submission form or self-evaluation report. This evidence may be contained in more than one document or sources of information. Therefore, the items listed under possible sources of evidence do not carry a one-to-one correspondence to the accreditation standards. Evidence should be existing information such as policies, processes, and performance outcomes, and is not supposed to be developed for use in the accreditation process.

A-4.7 HKCAAVQ does not prescribe how such a self-evaluation should be conducted. An operator is free to choose its self-evaluation approach such as commentary, case

study, gap and trend analysis or any other suitable approach(es). The information presented in a self-assessment and the supporting evidence will be evaluated holistically against the accreditation standard. The selection of evidence may differ according to the size, context and scope of the operator. The possible sources of evidence provided in Part B of this document serve to illustrate the nature of the documents/ information, and therefore should not be taken as exhaustive.

Part B –
Draft Revisions to Accreditation Standards

B1. Initial Evaluation

Purpose Statement	Domain of Competence
To ascertain whether an operator is competent to operate learning programme(s) that meet QF standards up to a certain QF level.	IE-1 Organisational Governance and Management IE-2 Financial and Resources Management IE-3 Organisational Staffing IE-4 Organisational Quality Assurance
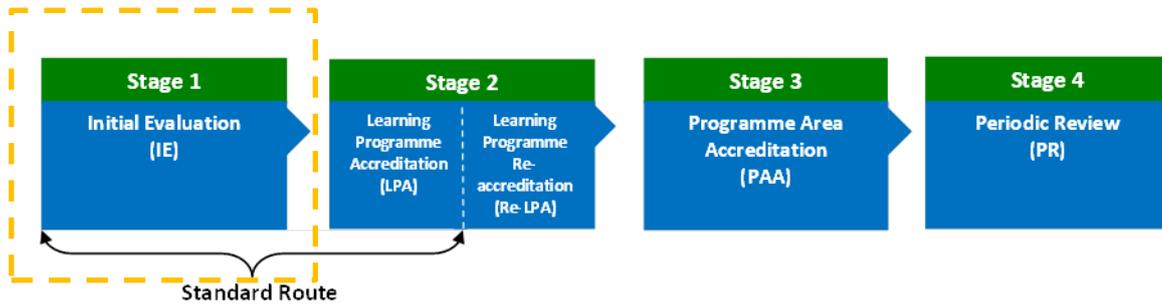
The Four-stage Quality Assurance Process

Domain: IE-1 Organisational Governance and Management

Accreditation Standard

The governing body of the operator has clearly defined and appropriate educational/training objectives and has implemented a management structure to realise those objectives, for the delivery of learning programmes that fall within the scope of the QF Level(s) sought.

For assessment of this standard, the operator is required, as a minimum, to:

IE-1.1   be an organisation, or part of it, that can legally operate learning programmes in Hong Kong.

IE-1.2   have ensured that people engaged with key responsibilities for its education and training operation are fit-and-proper persons.

IE-1.3   have governing and management team members, structures and processes that are sufficient to effectively manage its operations.

IE-1.4   have a governance and management team with appropriate skills and expertise to lead an education or training organisation and to manage its learning programmes.

IE-1.5   have set up a reliable and accessible learner management system to manage learner data, which can ensure qualifications will only be awarded when all the requirements are met.

IE-1.6   ensure that learners enrolled in a learning programmes have been provided with accurate and up-to-date information about the programme and the qualifications that the programme may lead to.

IE-1.7   ensure learners enrolled in a learning programme can complete the programme in the event of termination or closure of organisation/programme.

Why this accreditation standard is important
This standard aims to ensure that the operator has established governance and management arrangements incorporating input from key stakeholders, which can ensure that key decision-making processes are effective in continuously assessing and enhancing the quality and effectiveness of its own operation, while putting a strong emphasis on protecting the interests of learners.

In the context of non-local programmes, the term 'operator' refers to the collaborative provision as defined by a formal collaborative agreement between the local and non-local operator.

Criteria for consideration
▪ The operator assumes full accountability and responsibility for its education and training operation, regardless of whether any other third-parties, including its parent or associated organisation(s), are involved.
▪ The operator has a clear structure, in terms of functions and responsibility, for decision making and management of its education and training operation.
▪ The operator has developed a strategic plan which has identified educational/training objectives, and is supported by implementation plan(s) with measureable performance indicators.
▪ The operator has implemented procedures to handle grievances and/or complaints from staff and learners in a fair and transparent manner.
▪ The operator has policies and procedures in place which can ensure protection of learners, covering issues including but not limited to conflicts of interest, discrimination, harassment, and responsibility to learners.
▪ There is a full assessment of risks to the learning programmes offered, with appropriate and realistic plans to manage risk, and contingency arrangements to protect learner interests in the event of the termination of the learning programme.

[Specific for Non-local Learning Programme]
▪ Each partner in the collaboration must make collaborative provision as a matter of organisational policy,

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and must have taken the decision to contract through a properly authorised body within the governance and management structure of the organisation, with the authority to commit the necessary resources.

- The non-local operator should be fully authorised to operate in the country in which it is based, and the terms of its accreditation should permit (or not prohibit) its participation in collaborative provision with a partner outside its own country as well as to award qualifications.
- There should be a written and legally binding agreement setting out the rights and obligations of the non-local operator and the local operator. The agreement must cover those matters that are the responsibilities of each operator and the specific matters relating to each learning programme offered through the collaboration.
- There should be a clear, written statement of responsibilities for taking policy and operational decisions concerning the learning programmes covered by the collaboration. Being the awarding authority of the non-local qualification, the non-local operator should assume overall responsibility of the academic standards and quality control of the non-local learning programme.
- The partnership must have effective arrangements for information to be shared between the local and the non-local operators.

Possible sources of evidence

(The following are only some examples for illustrating the nature of evidence. More examples will be provided in the final version.)

- Business constitution, business registration or certificate of incorporation
- Regulations, statutes or other instruments that govern the organisation
- Membership of committees and terms of reference
- …

Domain: IE-2 Financial and Resources Management

Accreditation Standard

The operator must have well-defined systems and processes to manage its financial situation and ensure it is adequate to provide the necessary resources to achieve its educational/training objectives, and to improve quality and effectiveness of its operation.

For assessment of this standard, the operator is required, as a minimum, to:

IE-2.1   plan and manage its financial affairs with integrity and in a manner that can ensure financial stability to sustain operation of the organisation and to support the delivery of learning programmes.

IE-2.2   have a financial planning and budgeting process which is based on realistic assumptions with regard to the projected demands, costs of operation, and foreseeable changes in the relevant operational environment.

IE-2.3   have sufficient cash flow and/or reserves to support operation of learning programmes, and, when necessary, implement contingency plans to meet financial emergencies and unforeseen occurrences.

IE-2.4   have mechanisms to ensure alignment between financial planning and resource planning.

IE-2.5   have effective procedures to develop and provide the facilities and equipment necessary for operation of its learning programmes.

IE-2.6   demonstrate that its facilities and equipment are maintained in accordance with relevant legal requirements to ensure access, safety, security, and a healthy environment with consideration for environmental and ecological concerns.

IE-2.7   regularly review the adequacy, in terms of quality and quantity, of its educational and training resources, and take necessary follow-up actions.

Why this accreditation standard is important
This standard aims to ensure that the operator has the necessary financial and educational/training resources to support sustainable development of its education and training services. Management of financial and educational/training resources has to take into consideration programme planning, learners' needs and staffing requirements, and the quality of the provisions.

Criteria for consideration
- The operator is financially viable.
- There is a financial plan which is reviewed and approved by the governing function of the operator.
- The operator has internal financial control measures in place to ensure the availability of appropriate financial assets or properties of the operator for the operation of learning programme.
- The operator takes appropriate actions to prevent and detect fraud and misappropriation of funds. Such actions should be complementary to the level of external scrutiny, such as external audit, that the operator is subject to.
- The operator performs assessment of financial risks regularly and has appropriate risk mitigations in place.
- The operator is able to provide the necessary facilities and equipment which are appropriate to the nature of planned learning programme, and the planned intake of learners.

Possible sources of evidence
(The following are only some examples for illustrating the nature of evidence. More examples will be provided in the final version.)
- Audited financial statements of the operator and the parent / sponsoring company (for last 3 years for

academic operators and for last 2 years for vocational operators)
- Budgets / estimates / financial projections and business plans (for next 3 to 5 years for academic operators; sufficient to show sustainability for vocational operators)
- Finance information such as costing, tuition fee and breakeven number, planned learner enrolment, etc. for each programme for the next 3 to 5 years
- …

Domain: IE-3 Organisational Staffing

Accreditation Standard

The operator must be able to manage and engage staff who are competent to manage its operation, to lead programme planning and development, and to support delivery of learning programme(s) up to the claimed QF level.

For assessment of this standard, the operator is required, as a minimum, to:

IE-3.1   have a clear staffing structure with well-defined functions, responsibilities, and appointment criteria for different positions identified in the structure.

IE-3.2   have a realistic staffing plan which covers scope of expertise, staff cost, workload, learner-staff interaction, staff development and succession, that facilitates effective programme development, management and delivery, which aligns with its educational and training objectives.

IE-3.3   have set up transparent human resource policies and procedures for recruitment, performance review and staff development.

IE-3.4   maintain an adequate number of full-time staff to ensure the stability of programme management and development.

IE-3.5   have formal procedures to identify staff development needs and allocate the necessary resources to meet those needs.

Why this accreditation standard is important

This standard aims to ensure that the operator has set up a staffing structure and system that can ensure the availability of suitable staff for programme management and delivery on an on-going basis, and to ensure that operators determines and have adequate staff recruitment and development which align staff specialisation, teaching and industry experience, formal qualifications and professional/scholarly activity, to their duties.

Criteria for consideration

- The operator has determined a maximum learner-staff ratio for each of the learning and teaching activities typically adopted into its learning programmes to ensure adequate interaction between learners and staff.
- The operator systematically monitors the teaching and non-teaching workload of staff to ensure teaching effectiveness and healthy professional development.
- Staff tasked with teaching functions in a learning programme generally have a qualification one level higher than is awarded by the learning programme, or a terminal qualification, in a relevant area of study/training.
- The operator has policy and resources in place to encourage staff development and undertaking of professional/scholarly activities such as research, publication and consultancy with relation to the development of their specialisations, or for enriching industry expertise and knowledge about the development related to Qualification Framework.
- The operator has set out specific requirements for project or workplace supervisors.
- The operator provides orientation and training to teaching and support staff.
- There are transparent and fair procedures to process complaints or grievances from staff.

[Specific for Non-local Learning Programme]

- There should be effective policies to provide appropriate and sufficient opportunities for local teaching staff to be familiar with the academic ethos and operation of the non-local operator, including induction and on-going support.
- There should be effective policies and processes to ensure that the non-local learning programme addresses the local context, including meeting the QF standards, learner and community needs.

Possible sources of evidence

(The following are only some examples for illustrating the nature of evidence. More examples will be provided in the final version.)

- Profiles of all teaching / training staff (both full-time and part-time)
- Staff development policy
- Staff / trainers' handbook
- …

Domain: IE-4 Organisational Quality Assurance

Accreditation Standard

The operator must have internal quality assurance processes that can support effective management and monitoring of the quality of its learning programmes in delivering learning outcomes that align with the Generic Level Descriptors of the Qualifications Framework, to meet is educational/training objectives.

For assessment of this standard, the operator is required, as a minimum, to:

IE-4.1   have a robust mechanism for programme approval, periodic review and monitoring of its learning programmes and awards to ensure that the programme objectives and QF standard(s) are met.

IE-4.2   ensure that any part of its learning programmes, if delivered through a third-party, meet the same quality standard(s) as defined by the operator.

IE-4.3   demonstrate that there are processes to define learning outcomes and standards of performance at the programme and/or organisation level.

IE-4.4   collect, analyse and interpret evidence of attainment of learning outcomes to support evaluation of achievement of educational/training objectives at the organisational level.

IE-4.5   review the effectiveness of its quality assurance mechanism regularly and take necessary follow-up actions.

Why this accreditation standard is important
This standard aims to ensure that the operator continuously monitors the effectiveness of its learning programmes by using multiple sources of evidence to assess the achievement of learning, and take necessary follow-up actions. It is also important for the operator to conduct regular review and demonstrate continuous improvement in its quality assurance processes.

Criteria for consideration
- The operator organises external inputs in its quality assurance mechanism. This may include inputs such as external benchmarking, external examiners and/or advisors.
- The quality assurance mechanism incorporates adequate checks and balances to ensure objectivity between delivery and review of learning programmes.
- The quality assurance mechanism systematically collects feedback from stakeholders such as learners, staff and employers, to identify issues requiring follow-up actions.
- The quality assurance mechanism has been effectively implemented for different locations and/or modes of delivery, if any.
- Training is provided to relevant staff to ensure the quality assurance mechanism is fully understood and complied with at all times.

[Specific for Non-local Learning Programme]
- There must be effective integration of the quality mechanisms of the partners, with a clear delineation of the responsibilities of each, particularly with respect to programme development and management, and the authority to make changes to learning programmes.

Possible sources of evidence

(The following are only some examples for illustrating the nature of evidence. More examples will be provided in the final version.)
- Mechanism / flowchart for showing the process for programme development, approval responsibilities, management, review & modification and the evidence of operation (e.g. reports / meeting minutes)
- Mechanism and samples of records for collecting feedbacks from various stakeholders, programme monitoring and review; membership, profiles and terms of reference for internal / external committees or

advisory bodies / personnel involved in the QA mechanism
- List of external bodies / advisors consulted and sample records of consultation/ collecting external inputs
- …

B2. Learning Programme Accreditation / Re-accreditation

Purpose Statement	Domain of Competence
The purpose is twofold: To ascertain whether a learning programme (proposed or accredited) meets a QF standard to achieve the claimed objectives. To ascertain whether the operator of a learning programme is competent to continuously monitor and improve the effectiveness of its programme operation to meet the claimed programme objectives.	LPA-1 Programme Objectives and Learning Outcomes LPA-2 Learner Admission and Selection LPA-3 Programme Content and Structure LPA-4 Learning, Teaching and Assessment LPA-5 Programme Leadership and Staffing LPA-6 Learning, Teaching and Enabling Resources LPA-7 Programme Development, Review and Quality Assurance
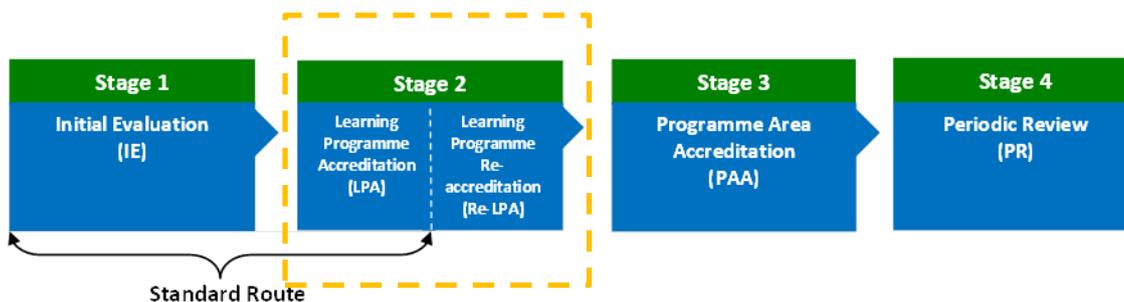
The Four-stage Quality Assurance Process

Domain: LPA-1 Programme Objectives and Learning Outcomes

Accreditation Standard

The learning programme must have objectives that address community, education or industry needs, with learning outcomes that meet the relevant QF standards, for all exit qualifications from the programme.

For assessment of this standard, the operator is required, as a minimum, to:

LPA-1.1 have identified the need for the learning programme which is articulated in the programme objectives.

LPA-1.2 demonstrate that the programme intended learning outcomes (PILOs) are consistent with the GLD at the claimed QF Level(s), and aligning with the programme objectives, for all exit qualifications from that programme.

LPA-1.3 demonstrate that the PILOs are specific, measurable and realistic.

LPA-1.4 demonstrate that the PILOs adequately reflect the level of difficulty, context of application, and the minimum performance requirement, and can be consistently interpreted.

Why this accreditation standard is important
This standard aims to ensure that the positioning of a learning programme has taken into consideration the needs of the sector, and competences of its graduates as reflected in the programme intended learning outcomes (PILOs) are commensurate with its objectives and the relevant QF Level requirements as stipulated in the GLD. Each exit point defined for the learning programme represents a standalone study path of its own right.

Criteria for consideration
- The PILOs, programme objectives and the educational/training objectives of the operator are aligned.
- The programme objectives and PILOs are clearly documented for consistent implementation and communication to learners.
- The programme objectives and PILOs are supported by a well-developed programme rationale.
- The programme aims to enhance employability and/or competitiveness of learners.
- There PILOs have been systematically mapped to the GLD, and internally moderated for consistency.
- The development of programme objectives and PILOs has incorporated inputs from relevant staff, stakeholders and/or external experts.

Special considerations relating to government policies
- For Associate Degree and Higher Diploma programmes, the programme objectives, learning outcomes and exit qualifications comply with the Updated Revised Common Descriptors for Associate Degree and Higher Diploma Programmes under the New Academic Structure.
- The use of titles for qualifications obtainable from the learning programme complies with the Award Title Scheme (ATS).

Possible sources of evidence

(The followings are only some of the examples and not a complete list. More examples will be provided in the final version of the refined accreditation standards for reference.)
- Market surveys related to demand of the programme and employability of graduates
- Programme objectives and intended learning outcomes (PILOs)
- Mapping of intended learning outcomes against programme objectives
- …

Domain: LPA-2 Learner Admission and Selection

Accreditation Standard

The minimum admission requirements of the learning programme must be clearly outlined for learners and staff. These requirements and the learner selection processes must be effective for recruitment of learners with the necessary skills and knowledge to undertake the programme.

For assessment of this standard, the operator is required, as a minimum, to:

LPA-2.1 ensure the alignment between the minimum admission requirements and the positioning of the learning programme.

LPA-2.2 have the minimum admission requirements clearly documented for consistent implementation and effective communication with learner and staff.

LPA-2.3 have formal and valid admission procedures for assessing whether an applicant meets the minimum admission requirements prior to enrolment.

LPA-2.4 have admission policies which govern the consideration of exemption, advanced standing, credit accumulation and transfer, for consistent implementation and effective communication with learner and staff.

LPA-2.5 have admission policies which govern the consideration of non-standard entry (admission not meeting the minimum admission requirements or equivalent).

Why this accreditation standard is important
This standard aims to ensure that the operator understands the characteristics and diversity of the target learners in order to develop an adequate learning process and to identify the necessary resources, for achieving the programme objectives.

Criteria for consideration
- There are mechanisms to provide accurate admission information to prospective learners.
- There are reliable procedures to verify the integrity and creditability of the credentials provided by applicants to inform admission decision-making.
- Admission data and decisions are fully and accurately retained and are accessible for review.
- Using data/information from operations, the operator should regularly check the appropriateness of admission standards and integrity of admission process in order to make sure that learners selected are able to complete the programme in normal circumstances.
- Training and support is provided to personnel responsible for carrying out admission functions.
- There are mechanisms in place to ensure that the admission standards are adhered to and admission procedures are fully implemented at all times, for different locations/modes of delivery.

Special considerations relating to government policies
- The minimum admission requirements are consistent with the requirements stipulated in the Updated Revised Common Descriptors for Associate Degree and Higher Diploma Programmes under the New Academic Structure.
- The quota for non-standard entry is not to exceed 5% for Associate Degree and Higher Diploma programmes on a programme basis, and 3% on an institutional basis.

Possible sources of evidence
(The following are only some examples for illustrating the nature of evidence. More examples will be provided in the final version.)
- Minimum entrance requirements for different entry points
- Admission policy (including special admission, credit accumulation and transfer (CAT), exemption, and

advanced standing)
- Learner selection and enrolment procedures, including any procedures for recognising prior learning
- …

Domain: LPA-3 Programme Content and Structure

Accreditation Standard

The content and structure of the learning programmes must be up-to-date, coherent, balanced and integrated to facilitate progression in order to enable learners to achieve the stated learning outcomes and the required standards at the appropriate QF level(s).

For assessment of this standard, the operator is required, as a minimum, to:

LPA-3.1 demonstrate that the PILOs and programme content and structure, are properly aligned, for ensuring adequate development of the necessary knowledge, skills, competencies and attitudes.

LPA-3.2 demonstrate that the breadth and depth of the learning programme provides a sufficient volume of learning to allow an average learner to achieve the intended learning outcomes, and reflect the Generic Level Descriptors (GLD) of the relevant QF level(s).

LPA-3.3 demonstrate that the programme structure clearly reflects a logical and coherent sequence of learning and the interdependencies between contents.

LPA-3.4 demonstrate that for programmes with multiple exit points, each exit point represents a standalone study path of its own right.

Why this accreditation standard is important
This standard aims to ensure that the selection and structuring of programme content are driven by PILOs, and are appropriate to facilitate the learners' attainment of the PILOs at the claimed QF Level. The structuring of the learning programme should be based on sound educational/training principles for constructing a coherent learning experience that develop knowledge, skills, competencies and attitudes.

Criteria for consideration
▪ There is a definitive programme document describing the approved programme content and structure, as well as the rules for progression.
▪ The design of the learning programme appropriately adopts a modular approach for effective programme management, delivery and assessment.
▪ The progression of the learning programme has been clearly built into the logic of programme design.
▪ There are horizontal and vertical integration of programme content, for learning programmes that span multiple years or stages.
▪ The programme structure provides opportunities for demonstration of integrated learning.

Special considerations relating to government policies
▪ For Associate Degree and Higher Diploma programmes, the generic and specialised contents of the proposed learning programme meet the requirement stipulated in the Updated Revised Common Descriptors for Associate Degree and Higher Diploma Programmes under the New Academic Structure.
▪ For learning programme to be labelled as SCS-based or SGC-based, the conditions stipulated in the Qualifications Guidelines for SCS-based/SGC-based Courses under QF are met.
▪ The assignment of QF credit has followed the Implementation Table of Use of Credit promulgated by EDB, and complies with the Concepts and Principles of QF Credits under QF.

Possible sources of evidence
(The following are only some examples for illustrating the nature of evidence. More examples will be provided in the final version.)
▪ Programme structure / course outline/syllabus about individual module/topic
▪ Definitive programme documents and syllabus
▪ Mapping of module intended learning outcomes against PILOs and GLD at the specified QF level
▪ …

Domain: LPA-4 Learning, Teaching and Assessment

Accreditation Standard

The learning, teaching and assessment activities designed for the programme must be effective in delivering the intended learning outcomes and programme content. A range of appropriate learning, teaching and assessment methods must be employed to effectively engage learners in the learning process.

For assessment of this standard, the operator is required, as a minimum, to:

LPA-4.1 have demonstrated how the chosen mode(s) of delivery are appropriate in consideration of the programme objectives and content.

LPA-4.2 demonstrate that the selection of learning, teaching and assessment activities has considered the characteristics and diversity of learners as allowed by the defined admission standards.

LPA-4.3 demonstrate that the selected learning, teaching and assessment activities are appropriate for the programme content, PILOs.

LPA-4.4 have ensured that all assessments are effective, reliable, valid, and fair.

LPA-4.5 demonstrate that the assessment tasks are effectively aligned with PILOs, and are based on criterion-referencing with rubrics for consistent marking and moderation.

LPA-4.6 provide timely feedback to learners in all forms of learning, teaching and assessment activities, and identify learners-at-risk.

LPA-4.7 provide learners with clear, accurate information and dependable access to support services that give learners optimum opportunity for successful completion of the programme.

Why this accreditation standard is important
This standard aims to ensure that learning, teaching and assessment activities together provide the learning experience required to facilitate attainment of the PILOs by learners upon completion of the programme. The selection of learning, teaching and assessment activities should aim at maximising the effectiveness of learning, by adopting proven methodologies of learning, teaching and assessment.

Criteria for consideration
- Appropriate learning and teaching activities are adopted in the learning programme, which may include lecture, tutorial, experiment, problem-solving, simulation, online learning, on-the-job-training, work-based learning and workplace attachment for example.
- Appropriate assessment activities are designed into the learning programme, which may include assignment, examination, project, practical test and interview for example.
- There is policy to ensure availability of staff to learners for consultation and advice.
- The operator has a process for estimating the notional learning hours for different learning and teaching activities for assignment of QF credit, if applicable.
- There is a system for internal and/or external moderation of assessments to ensure consistency of standard and marking.
- The operator has planned for industry and workplace attachment, including the insurance, supervision and assessment arrangements, where applicable.
- The operator has policies to ensure the integrity and validity of assessments. This may cover photographing/recording of practical assessments, detection of plagiarism, authenticating identity of learners, external moderation and benchmarking for example.
- The operator provides appropriate learner support services, which may include learning diagnostics, personal counselling, career and life planning for example.

Possible sources of evidence

(The following are only some examples for illustrating the nature of evidence. More examples will be provided in the final version.)

- Rationales for the chosen teaching and learning methods, and mode of teaching (e.g. lectures, tutorials, laboratories, practical demonstration, work placement, etc.) against the learning outcomes
- Samples of teaching and learning materials for two or three modules
- Sample lesson plans
- …

Domain: LPA-5 Programme Leadership and Staffing

Accreditation Standard

The operator must have sufficient programme leaders, teaching and support staff with the qualities, competence, qualifications and experience necessary for the effective programme management, i.e. planning, development, delivery and monitoring of the programme. There must be adequate staff development scheme and activities to ensure that those engaged are kept updated for the quality delivery of the programme.

For assessment of this standard, the operator is required, as a minimum, to:

LPA-5.1 have a person with adequate experience in programme management and development (e.g. programme leader) appointed, who is responsible for leading and overseeing the effectiveness of programme operation.

LPA-5.2 have adequate and qualified teaching and support staff for conducting the learning, teaching and assessment activities designed for the learning programme, in consideration of the projected number of learners.

LPA-5.3 have a staff development plan aligning with the on-going development of the learning programme.

LPA-5.4 ensure that the programme team works collaboratively and effectively to achieve the programme objectives.

LPA-5.5 have maintained a reasonable workload for staff members engaged in the learning programme.

Why this accreditation standard is important
This standard aims to ensure that, regardless of the mode of engagement (full-time/part-time, paid/unpaid, internal/external), those engaged in the operation of the learning programme should be qualified and understand the philosophy and design of the learning programme in order to perform effectively. A stable programme leadership is essential for continuity and overseeing the effectiveness of programme operation to achieve the programme objectives. To ensure the workload is reasonable, the calculation of workload includes all teaching and non-teaching duties assigned by the operator for its learning programme(s).

Criteria for consideration
- The operator has defined programme-specific staff appointment criteria for the learning programme.
- The profile of appointed staff is demonstrably commensurate with the requirements of the learning programme.
- Staff development activities clearly correspond to professional development, building up industry experience, as well as enhancement of knowledge or skills about teaching, learning and assessment, which are relevant to the learning programme.
- Staff are active in research, publication, consultancy and/or other professional/scholarly activities.
- There exist effective communications within the programme team to ensure consistent delivery of the learning programme and alignment of expectations.

Possible sources of evidence

(The following are only some examples for illustrating the nature of evidence. More examples will be provided in the final version.)
- Staff manual/ handbook with policies and plans for staff development
- Academic leadership (including the name(s) of Faculty Dean / Programme / Stream Leader(s) and their respective roles and responsibilities in regard to the programme)
- Appointment criteria for management and teaching staff for the programme at different ranks
- …

Domain: LPA-6 Learning, Teaching and Enabling Resources

Accreditation Standard

The operator must be able to provide learning, teaching and enabling resources that are appropriate and sufficient for the learning, teaching and assessment activities of the learning programme, regardless of location and mode of delivery.

For assessment of this standard, the operator is required, as a minimum, to:

LPA-6.1 demonstrate that its current financial status can fund the operation of the learning programme, in consideration of other educational/training services being provided by the operator.

LPA-6.2 ensure that learners have adequate access to the necessary learning, teaching and enabling resources, also taking into consideration any other educational/training services being provided by the operator.

LPA-6.3 ensure that the provision of learning teaching and enabling resources aligns with the learning, teaching and assessment activities.

LPA-6.4 ensure that the learning, teaching and enabling resources are up-to-date and their utilisation is monitored to ensure that they are adequate for the operation of the learning programme.

LPA-6.5 have a resource development plan aligning with the on-going development of the learning programme.

Why this accreditation standard is important
This standard aims to ensure that the operator plans for the learning, teaching and enabling resources effectively and is backed by necessary financial resources. Learning, teaching and enabling resources may include lecture theatre, tutorial room, library, laboratory, studio, supplementary aids, software and online databases for example. Learner support services such as counselling, life planning and learning diagnosis are example of enabling resources.

Criteria for consideration
▪ The learners will have access to suitable and safe facilities and adequate equipment necessary for their learning activities. Arrangements have been made to ensure these resources are accessible at the time of delivering the relevant parts of the learning programme.
▪ The operator has supplementary aids and services available to learners with special needs.
▪ The library and online materials are up-to-date and relevant to the content of the learning programme.
▪ Feedback on the quality of learning, teaching and enabling resources is regularly collected from learners and staff for analysis and enhancement.
▪ The learners have access to adequate computing and network facilities for learning, conducting research, and communication with peer learners and staff.
▪ Learners and staff are provided with necessary training and information to ensure that they are aware of and know to how use the learning, teaching and enabling resources.
▪ Steps have taken to ensure that the learners and staff have the right of use to the materials such as software, photograph, video required for teaching/learning purpose.
▪ The support provided to learners is adequate to the delivery mode adopted.

Possible sources of evidence
(The following are only some examples for illustrating the nature of evidence. More examples will be provided in the final version.)
▪ Description of the premises and teaching facilities for the Programme
▪ A detailed list of specialist facilities and equipment available for the Programme
▪ Library resources relevant to the programme
▪ …

Domain: LPA-7 Programme Development, Review and Quality Assurance

Accreditation Standard

The operator must monitor and review the performance of the learning programmes on an ongoing basis to ensure that the programmes remain current and valid and that the learning outcomes, teaching and learning activities and learner assessments are effective.

For assessment of this standard, the operator is required, as a minimum, to:

LPA-7.1 demonstrate that the development or review of the programme has strictly followed the approved policies and procedures of the operator.

LPA-7.2 demonstrate that the overall design of the learning programme is aligned with the claimed QF level(s), meets the learning needs of the target learners in order to achieve the PILOs, and is supported by adequate staff and other resources.

LPA-7.3 demonstrate that the alignment of learning, teaching and assessment activities to achieve the PILOs has been validated.

LPA-7.4 have incorporated external and internal inputs for programme development, management and monitoring for ensuring continuous improvement of the quality of the learning programme throughout the whole process.

LPA-7.5 demonstrate the appropriateness of the admission standards.

LPA-7.6 evaluate the effectiveness of the policies and procedures in programme development, review and quality assurance for facilitating internal decision making by the governance and management team.

Why this accreditation standard is important
This standard aims to ensure that the programme is properly managed and monitored for effectiveness and achieving its objectives, using information/data that is comprehensive and reliable.

Criteria for consideration
- Regular quality assurance activities, both internal and external, of learning programme have been properly planned with allocated resources.
- Retention, progression and completion rates are regularly monitored and follow-up actions are identified and implemented if necessary.
- Admission and assessment data are analysed for possible correlation and patterns for review of admission standards.
- Surveys are conducted for staff, learners and employers to collect feedback on programme delivery and outcomes.
- Learners, staff, employers, alumni, practitioners and other relevant stakeholders are regularly involved in the assessment and alignment of programme objectives and learning outcomes.
- Issues identified by internal and external quality assurance activities are acted upon appropriately.

Possible sources of evidence

(The following are only some examples for illustrating the nature of evidence. More examples will be provided in the final version.)
- Composition, membership and terms of reference of the committees involved in the programme development, management, review and quality assurance process
- Flow chart showing the interrelationship of the committees / personnel involved in programme development, management and the QA process (differentiation between internal and external input is required)
- Internal Validation Report (for all academic programmes and HD programmes)
- …

B3. Programme Area Accreditation

Purpose Statement	Domain of Competence
To ascertain whether an operator is competent to quality assure its learning programmes within a programme area up to a certain QF level, as demonstrated from the track record of its operation of accredited learning programmes in a particular discipline or industry area, and its capacity to enhance its organisational effectiveness to meet the educational/training objectives.	PAA-1 Organisational Governance and Management PAA-2 Strategic Planning and Development PAA-3 Financial Management and Viability PAA-4 Programme Area Development and Management PAA-5 Organisational Quality Assurance and Enhancement PAA-6 Learning, Teaching and Assessment Policies PAA-7 Staffing PAA-8 Programme Area Resources
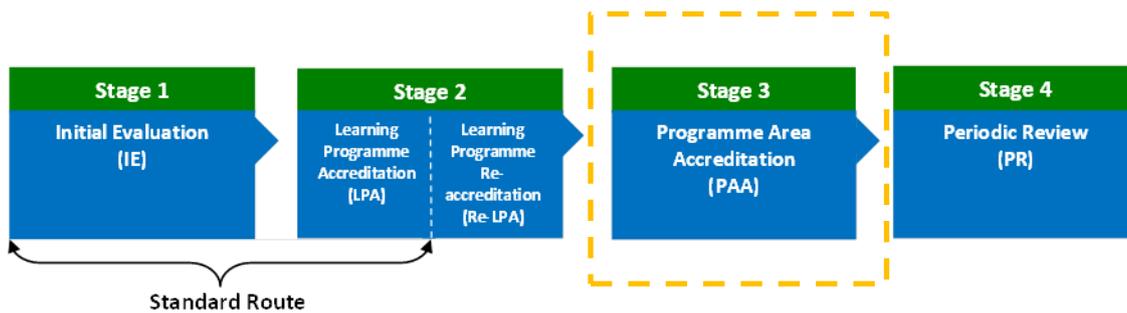
The Four-stage Quality Assurance Process

Domain PAA-1: Organisational Governance and Management

Accreditation Standard

The operator must have a governing body that defines the operator's vision and mission and establishes educational/training objectives aligned with the vision and mission. The governing body has set a clear and explicit direction for development based on the operator's values and characteristics, and has implemented a management system which is fit-for-purpose and effective in meeting the educational/training objectives.

For assessment of this standard, the operator is required, as a minimum, to:

PAA-1.1 have defined its vision and mission which are appropriate for its provision of learning programmes, with education and training objectives demonstrably achieved.

PAA-1.2 plans strategically, realistically and effectively and drives the organisation to achieve its objectives, by defining relevant targets and performance measures.

PAA-1.3 have clearly defined its organisational structure and decision-making processes showing a high degree of integrity, responsibility and accountability.

PAA-1.4 demonstrate that the governing body regularly considers reports from the management, and takes appropriate actions on the findings.

PAA-1.5 demonstrate that its governing body regularly engages itself in self-review and training to enhance its effectiveness and quality of decisions.

Why this accreditation standard is important

This standard aims to ensure that the operator has governance which can provide overall direction for the organisation with clearly defined lines of accountability and rules of decision-making and systematic consideration of input from key stakeholders, and to ensure that the management can implement the set objectives and is responsible for the efficiency, effectiveness and quality of operation.

Criteria for consideration

- The operator has set up clear procedure to avoid real or perceived conflict of interest, and maintain a clear separation between governing and management functions to ensure checks and balances.
- The operator has set up clear appointment criteria and procedure to ensure that those appointed to perform governing and key management functions possess the necessary knowledge, skills and experience, and with an appropriate diversity of background covering the range of duties to be performed.
- There are processes of training, induction and continuing professional development for key personnel who perform governing and management functions, so that the appointed personnel are fully informed of their duties and responsibilities.
- There is an implemented process ensuring effective succession planning for key positions.
- There is a clear scheme of delegation of authority and line of reporting which is efficient and effective.
- There are clear communication protocols within the organisation to ensure clarity about defined targets and compliance with policy.
- The operator enhances integrity and transparency in its operations, by implementing appropriate policies and procedures to process complaints and grievances, and responding to them in a timely and effective manner.
- Steps have been taken to fulfil legal and social responsibilities and obligations in the prevailing context.
- There are formal channels at different levels to actively incorporate external inputs into the governance and management decision making process.
- There is an information management system that can provide reliable data to inform decision making.
- Independent external review is engaged to provide reflection on governance and management effectiveness.

Possible sources of evidence

(The following are only some examples for illustrating the nature of evidence. More examples will be provided in the final version.)

- Regulations, statutes or other instruments relevant to organisational governance
- Organisational governance structure
- Interrelationship between governing body and its committees
  - Terms of reference
  - Composition
  - Membership
  - Delegations schedules
- …

Domain PAA-2: Strategic Planning and Development

Accreditation Standard

The operator must have formal processes for developing its strategic plan, which are effective in driving achievement of educational/training objectives. The strategic plan should focus on the analyses, decisions and actions needed to sustain and enhance the operation of learning programmes.

For assessment of this standard, the operator is required, as a minimum, to:

PAA-2.1   demonstrate an effective strategic plan process which clearly identifies the actions, priorities and allocation of resources for achieving defined objectives while taking environmental developments, its strengths and weaknesses and feedback from stakeholders into consideration.

PAA-2.2   demonstrate to have periodically engaged its stakeholders, as well as other relevant parties, to assess its strategic positioning, and alignment of purposes, objectives and actions, in the process of developing its strategic plan.

PAA-2.3   demonstrate that the periodic planning process is responding to the outcomes of implementation and the operational environment in a timely manner.

PAA-2.4   have a risk management system in operation with potential risks clearly prioritised and corresponding mitigations appropriately resourced.

Why this accreditation standard is important
This standard aims to ensure that the operator's strategic planning provides a road map for proactive development of an organisation, instead of reacting to unexpected changes, catching up with the developments or handling crisis. A strategic plan provides the directions and means of realising the vision and mission of an operator, and also the metrics associated with the performance indicators. A good strategic planning process helps foster a culture of commitment and transparency.

Criteria for consideration
- The strategic plan is based on realistic projections.
- The strategic plan reflects fully informed and well deliberated decisions by the governing body and management
- The operator considers relevant current and anticipated changes as part of its strategic planning, review and resource allocation.
- The strategic plan focuses on continuous growth and improvement of learner performance, professional growth of staff, and the operator's competency to achieve its mission.
- Learners, staff and other relevant stakeholders are provided with opportunities to participate in and provide input into planning for improvement.
- External inputs are regularly taken into consideration in the strategic planning and review.
- There is a risk register, or similar document, which is current and identifies the potential risks, assessment of impacts, action plans, and the owners of the identified risks.

Possible sources of evidence

(The following are only some examples for illustrating the nature of evidence. More examples will be provided in the final version.)
- Long-term and short-term strategic plans
- Resource plans in support of the strategic plans
- Industry needs analysis in support of the strategic plans
- …

Domain PAA-3: Financial Management and Viability

Accreditation Standard

The operator must have an established financial management approach, which is effective in ensuring the operator's short-term and long-term viability to sustain its operation in alignment with the current strategic plan, and allows it to meet its educational/training objectives.

For assessment of this standard, the operator is required, as a minimum, to:

PAA-3.1   demonstrate that it plans realistically to ensure current and future availability of staff, funds, teaching, learning and enabling resources, for quality operation of its learning programmes.

PAA-3.2   demonstrate that its financial resources have been stable and adequate for future financial needs or challenges, with regard to the establishment of the operator and nature of operation.

PAA-3.3   demonstrate that the governing body and management exercise prudent control over the financial operations and decision making.

PAA-3.4   demonstrate that the financial planning process has fully considered the priorities for development and operation of learning programmes.

PAA-3.5   have regularly and systematically reviewed the effectiveness of its financial system, with follow-up on any issues identified.

Why this accreditation standard is important

This standard aims to ensure that the development of a programme area is supported by sustainable resource planning based on the short-term and long-term financial health and effectiveness of the operator. It is critical that the operator is not only able to provide the financial assets or supports, but also has the competence to plan and manage and its financial means in alignment with the development of the programme area.

Criteria for consideration
- The operator has unqualified independent financial audits in the past three years, if applicable.
- The operator has functioned without an operational deficit in the past three years. Otherwise, a detailed explanation of how the situation was coped with and how to prevent similar occurrence in the future should be provided.
- Budgets are developed with realistic projections of revenue and expenditures.
- Financial risks are assessed in a regular manner in consideration of actual outcomes and new developments.
- The operator practices effective oversight of contractual, collaborative and partner relationships.
- Financial planning and budgeting processes have proved to be effective from the record of operation.

Possible sources of evidence

(The following are only some examples for illustrating the nature of evidence. More examples will be provided in the final version.)
- Finance and budget policy
- Audited financial statements throughout a specified period
- Financial projection for the next five years
- …

Domain PAA-4: Programme Area Development and Management

Accreditation Standard

The operator must substantiate the proposed programme area by its track record of operation of QF-recognised learning programmes in relevant discipline or industry areas, in alignment with organisational objectives and planned resources.

For assessment of this standard, the operator is required, as a minimum, to:

PAA-4.1   demonstrate that the proposed programme area is underpinned by a framework of consistent body of knowledge, principles and practices, which is acceptable to the relevant disciplines, industries, or professions.

PAA-4.2   have established a sustainable leadership of the proposed programme area which has the relevant expertise and experience to provide directions, and to oversee the effective implementation of development of that programme area.

PAA-4.3   demonstrate how the approved development plan of the proposed programme area reflects the strategic positioning of the operator, the synergy within the proposed programme area, resource implications, and the necessary means of implementation.

PAA-4.4   have established criteria and procedures for identifying the needs for, or termination of, a learning programme within the proposed programme area, and the requirements for successful implementation.

PAA-4.5   demonstrate the relevance of experience from the operation of existing QF-recognised learning programmes with the proposed programme area.

Why this accreditation standard is important
This standard aims to ensure that that the track record of the operator from operation of QF-recognised learning programmes is relevant and transferrable to the proposed programme area. In particular, it is important to recognise that the leadership required to manage and develop a programme area is different from the leadership required to operate learning programmes. The proposed programme area must be self-consistent and contribute to the development of competencies that meet the needs of the society.

Criteria for consideration
- There is a strong rationale for the proposed programme area academically or from a training perspective, with consultation with the Classification of Areas of Study and Training.
- The proposed programme area has strong distinctive features that align with the vision and mission of the operator, and are derived from the features of the existing QF-recognised learning programmes.
- The leadership of the proposed programme area has demonstrated effective leadership through a shared purpose, which is recognised by the staff.
- The existing QF-recognised learning programmes within the proposed programme area consistently met the planned enrolment targets.
- Programme planning for the existing QF-recognised learning programmes has proved to be effective.

Possible sources of evidence

(The following are only some examples for illustrating the nature of evidence. More examples will be provided in the final version.)
- Programme Area Committee structure
    - Interrelationship between committees
    - Terms of reference
    - Composition
    - Membership
- Major improvements made to the quality of learner learning throughout the specified period

- Information relating to the existing programmes and/or new programmes to be introduced under the programme area seeking accreditation
  - Documents on programme development (for new programmes) and approval
  - Documents showing on-going monitoring of the existing programmes
  - Agreements with workplace learning / placement organisations
  - Summary of improvements made since the last accreditation / re-accreditation
  - Statistics of the programmes in the programme area, including number of applications, enrolment numbers, retention and dropout rates, graduation rate, etc.
  - Graduate survey results, including education / career pathways, attainment of professional qualifications, and employment for graduates of the programmes in the programme area throughout the specified period
- …

Domain PAA-5: Organisational Quality Assurance and Enhancement

Accreditation Standard

The Operator must have an effective quality assurance system with well-defined policies and procedures in place to determine and to monitor the quality and standards of its learning programmes, and ensure alignment with its educational/training objectives and the stated QF level(s).

For assessment of this standard, the operator is required, as a minimum, to:

PAA-5.1   demonstrate that the management of quality is embedded within all key planning, operational and review processes.

PAA-5.2   have implemented a mechanism for effective monitoring and reviewing of organisational performance against defined education and training objectives periodically.

PAA-5.3   have well established practices demonstrating a culture of evidence, self-reflection and improvement, informed by gathering, analysing, and interpretation of information.

PAA-5.4   have adopted a systematic and rigorous approach for consistent interpretation and implementation of the Generic Level Descriptors for design of learning programmes within the context of the programme area.

PAA-5.5   demonstrate that its programme review procedures is effective for ensuring that learning programmes have appropriate content, rigor and standards of learner performance, for the stated QF level(s). These procedures have focuses on validation of learning outcomes and enhancement of learning.

PAA-5.6   review the effectiveness of its quality assurances system regularly, with follow-up on any issue identified.

Why this accreditation standard is important
This standard aims to ensure that there is periodic assessment of attainment of educational/training objectives using reliable data to inform decision making and formulation of evidence-based follow-up actions. Long-term success of a programme area hinges on the quality, effectiveness and relevancy of operation, which rests upon the contribution that each of the learning programmes and services makes toward achieving the educational/training objectives in a coordinated manner.

Criteria for consideration
- The operator has established a track record from the operation of cognate programmes in the proposed programme area that, as a matter of quality assurance, it reviews organisational effectiveness regularly and is able to respond with well deliberated actions and resources. This includes reviewing the effectiveness of governance and management functions, financial and resource planning, programme planning and management, staff planning, and the reviewing process itself.
- The actions implemented for enhancement of effectiveness, both programme and organisational, have proved to be effective.
- The operator collects feedback from the key stakeholders to inform the review process.
- The quality assurances processes are effective for approval and periodic review of learning programmes, and validation of learning outcomes.
- The quality assurances processes are supported by reliable collection, analyses and interpretation of data. The data may include comparative data from external sources, as well as environmental data.

Possible sources of evidence
(The following are only some examples for illustrating the nature of evidence. More examples will be provided in the final version.)
- Quality assurance policy

- Committees responsible for quality assurance, including programme development, management and review
  - Interrelationship between committees
  - Terms of reference
  - Composition
  - Membership
- Process and procedures for programme approval, management and review
- …

Domain PAA-6: Learning, Teaching and Assessment Policies

Accreditation Standard

The operator must have developed and implemented effective policies for the development of learner-centred strategies for achievement of learning outcomes, through alignment of educational/training objectives, learning experiences, assessment of learning, and learning supports.

For assessment of this standard, the operator is required, as a minimum, to:

PAA-6.1   ensure that all learners have access to accurate and complete information about the costs, admissions and completion requirements, and the award(s) to be granted upon successful completion of a learning programme.

PAA-6.2   collect and analyse admission and other necessary data to track achievement and satisfaction for an understanding of learner characteristics and the preferred mode of learning.

PAA-6.3   provide learner support services that are congruent with learner characteristics and the programmes it offers.

PAA-6.4   have developed strategies ensuring that a learning programme provides an authentic learning experience to deliver the intended learning outcomes, as well as alignment of learning, teaching and assessment activities.

PAA-6.5   have systematically collected and analysed evidence of attainment of learning outcomes to inform formulation of learning, teaching and assessment strategies.

Why this accreditation standard is important
This standard aims to ensure that the learning, teaching and assessment activities are appropriate for its content and levels of study/training, and contributing to the attainment of intended learning outcomes. Within a programme area, there exist teaching and learning activities to encourage integration of interdisciplinary knowledge and skills to the extent congruent to the programme area.

Criteria for consideration
▪   The learning, teaching and assessment strategies have proved to be effective in the operation of the existing QF-recognised learning programmes.
▪   The learning, teaching and assessment policies driving the development of learning, teaching and assessment strategies are effective in ensuring the alignment between learning, teaching and assessment activities, to achieve the programme objectives of the existing QF-recognised learning programmes.
▪   The learning, teaching and assessment policies successfully created a high quality learning and teaching environment, physical or virtual, that fosters inquisitive learning and demonstration of competencies, for different learning styles and capabilities.
▪   There are effective learning, teaching and assessment activities for integration and demonstration of interdisciplinary knowledge and skills within the proposed programme area.

Possible sources of evidence

(The following are only some examples for illustrating the nature of evidence. More examples will be provided in the final version.)
▪   Policy on teaching / training and learning, including support for workplace attachment
▪   Ratio of teaching / training staff to learners
▪   Curriculum of programmes in the programme area
▪   ….

Domain PAA-7: Staffing

Accreditation Standard

The operator must have a suitably qualified and competent workforce which is capable to deliver the learning programmes in the proposed programme area, and can ensure sustainable development of the proposed programme area.

For assessment of this standard, the operator is required, as a minimum, to:

PAA-7.1　have in place a staffing plan which is effective in ensuring that there are sufficient management, teaching and administrative staff with appropriate qualifications and experience, and is congruent with future developments of the proposed programme area.

PAA-7.2　have developed procedures which are effective in ensuring that staff recruitment/engagement, development, workload, remuneration and appraisal are aligned with the learning, teaching and assessment strategies within the proposed programme area.

PAA-7.3　have developed processes to systematically assess and enhance teaching effectiveness within the proposed programme area.

PAA-7.4　have regularly conducted/provided staff development activities designed to enhance pedagogical knowledge and skills for conducting learning and teaching activities and assessment of learning outcomes.

PAA-7.5　have effective policies that encourage continuous professional development and engagement in solving real-world problems.

Why this accreditation standard is important
This standard aims to ensure that, regardless of the mode of engagement (full-time/part-time, paid/unpaid, internal/external), qualified personnel are engaged to conducting the teaching, learning and assessment activities, as well as contributing to the healthy development of the programme area. It is important that staff are conversant with the latest developments within their own areas of expertise/profession, as well as committed to providing high quality educational/training services.

Criteria for consideration
- Staff planning has proved to be effective in the operation of the existing QF-recognised learning programmes.
- The established staff profile is demonstrably commensurate with the proposed programme area.
- There are effective policies and procedures for staff to update themselves in pedagogical advancement and adopting technologies for teaching and learning, and to engage in scholarly and/or professional activities.
- Staff understand and are committed to the vision and mission of the organisation, and the positioning of the programme area within the context of achieving the vision and mission, in order to perform effectively.
- Teaching effectiveness is reliably assessed to inform staff appraisal and development.

Possible sources of evidence
(The following are only some examples for illustrating the nature of evidence. More examples will be provided in the final version.)
- Policy and procedures for staff recruitment, deployment, appraisal, promotion and dismissal
- Appointment criteria for staff with different capacities and at different ranks
- Overall staff profile and justification for this profile (including academic, teaching / training, administrative and support staff)
- …

Domain PAA-8: Programme Area Resources

Accreditation Standard

The operator must have implemented a well-managed approach to its provision of learning, teaching and enabling resources which aligns with the current and anticipated development of the proposed programme area.

For assessment of this standard, the operator is required, as a minimum, to:

PAA-8.1   have policies and procedures which are effective for the identification, acquisition and maintenance of the necessary resources, which is linked to financial planning.

PAA-8.2   have regularly monitored and assessed the utilisation and adequacy of resources to inform projective planning, including offering of new learning programme.

PAA-8.3   demonstrate that learners and staff receive the necessary support to acquire the skills to make effective use of the available resources.

PAA-8.4   demonstrate that key stakeholders, such as learners and staff, have provided input to the resource planning process.

Why this accreditation standard is important

This standard aims to ensure that the planning and allocation of learning, teaching and enabling resources are based on sound financial planning aligned with programme area planning, and with a clear understanding of the learners' needs. Comparable resources must be available regardless of the location/mode of delivery to achieve the same learning outcomes. Utilisation of such resources is periodically reviewed to ensure adequate and currency, and to provide reliable information for projective planning.

Criteria for consideration
- Resource planning has proved to be effective in the operation of the existing QF-recognised learning programmes.
- There is access to library, information and technology resources which are sufficient in quantity and quality to support the learning and teaching activities planned for the proposed programme area, regardless of the location/mode of delivery.
- The physical and virtual learning environment is reliable, supporting and safe for its learners, and is conducive for creating an effective learning atmosphere.
- There are systems to support efficient planning, monitoring and evaluation of resources.
- Resource planning has demonstrated an appreciation of the social, environmental and cultural impacts.

Possible sources of evidence

(The following are only some examples for illustrating the nature of evidence. More examples will be provided in the final version.)
- Policy on deployment of resources for ensuring their effective allocation
- Overview of facilities and equipment
- Policy on learner / learner support services
    - Academic and pastoral counselling
    - Career planning / coaching
    - Financial aid and scholarship
    - Online learning system
    - Learner amenities
    - Workplace learning and placement
    - Other support scheme(s)
- …

B4. Periodic Review

Purpose Statement	Domain of Competence
To ascertain whether an operator continues to be effective to achieve its vision and mission by systematically enhancing quality of its operation by formulating and implementing actions based on evidence.	PR-1 Organisational Effectiveness and Planning PR-2 Organisational Leadership and Staffing PR-3 Programme Area Development and Management PR-4 Management of Resources and Services PR-5 Quality Assurance and Enhancement
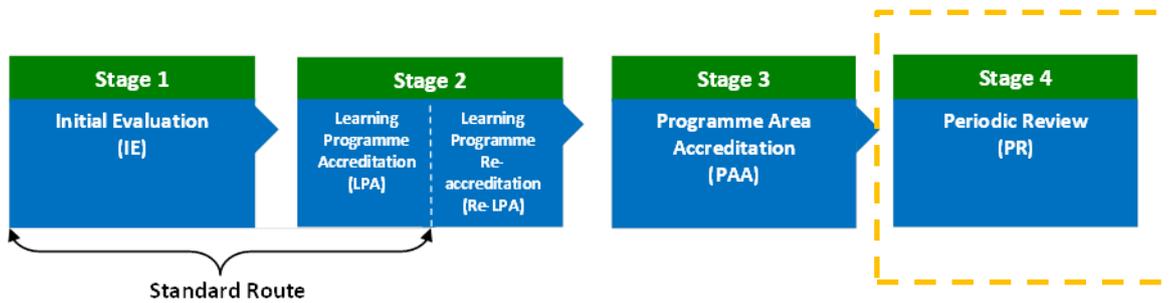
The Four-stage Quality Assurance Process

Domain PR-1: Organisational Effectiveness and Planning

Accreditation Standard

The operator must demonstrate that it is meeting its educational/training objectives, aligned with its vision and mission, and is informed by comprehensive review of organisation effectiveness and implementation of strategically planned initiatives.

For assessment of this standard, the operator is required, as a minimum, to:

PR-1.1   substantiate its attainment of educational/training objectives within the approved programme area(s), using information such as organisational outcomes and/or performance indicators.

PR-1.2   demonstrate its accomplishments relating to its vision and mission, through periodic programme review and evaluation of programme objectives and achievement of learning outcomes. Quantitative and qualitative data from the approved programme area(s) are used for analysis at the organisational level.

PR-1.3   demonstrate the effectiveness of its internal quality assurance system in terms of driving operational and educational/training enhancements within the approved programme area(s).

PR-1.4   demonstrate that sound research practices and analysis of data are used to improve educational/training offerings, and services.

PR-1.5   demonstrate a high level of oversight over its educational/training offerings and administrative operations through processes that monitor and improve organisational effectiveness.

Why this accreditation standard is important
This standard aims to ensure that the operator continuously enhances its organisational effectiveness through evidence-based decision-making for achieving the organisational vision and mission. As a result, the organisation remains relevant and able to sustain a high quality of services that meets the needs of its clients on an on-going basis. Planning at the organisational level is required to ensure alignment between programme area planning, staff planning, financial and resource planning, in anticipation of the foreseeable changes and challenges.

Criteria for consideration
- Enhancement of organisational effectiveness is evident and is linked to strategic planning.
- Policies on academic / training development, quality assurance and resource allocation are proven to be coherent, appropriate and responsive to changes.
- Use of proven qualitative and quantitative analysis tools in strategic planning such as gap analysis, predictive analytics, trend analysis and balanced scorecard, is evident.
- Stakeholders are engaged in evaluation of organisational effectiveness and strategic planning.
- Appropriate technologies and reporting tools, are adopted to support strategic planning.
- Up-to-date, relevant and accurate information about learning programmes is available for prospective learners to make informed decisions before enrolment. This may include graduate statistics and employability data.

Possible sources of evidence

(The following are only some examples for illustrating the nature of evidence. More examples will be provided in the final version.)
- Actions taken throughout the validity period to show the implementation of the strategic plan
- Quantitative and/or qualitative indicators used to measure the effectiveness in implementing the plan
- Records of review of the strategic plan throughout the validity period to show the effectiveness of the strategic planning and possible adjustments in response to changes
- …

Domain PR-2: Organisational Leadership and Staffing

Accreditation Standard

The operator must demonstrate that it continues to have a sufficient number of qualified and competent programme leaders, teaching and support staff, as a result of effective staff planning and development, and that aligns with development of the programme area(s).

For assessment of this standard, the operator is required, as a minimum, to:

PR-2.1 demonstrate that programme leaders are effective in planning, development and review of the learning programme(s) they are responsible for, by providing directions and making key decisions relating to offering/termination of programmes, management of staff, allocation of resources, and assurance of quality.

PR-2.2 demonstrate the effectiveness of staff planning by providing an analysis of the established staff profile and trends.

PR-2.3 demonstrate that the current policy and practices in appraising and developing staff at various levels are effective and efficient.

PR-2.4 demonstrate that the appointment and deployment of teaching and support staff are effective to ensure that they have appropriate academic, vocational or professional qualifications with relevant and up-to-date experience / knowledge and skills in the development, management, delivery and assessment of outcome-based learning programmes and in reviewing and quality assuring such programmes.

PR-2.5 demonstrate that effective measures are in place to ensure that workload of staff is maintained at a reasonable level to ensure staff development and/or undertaking of professional/scholarly activities.

Why this accreditation standard is important

This standard aims to ensure that the operator has a high quality and committed workforce which share the vision and mission of the organisation, and is able to translate the vision and mission into concrete plans, actions and outcomes at the organisational and programme area level. This requires identification of the desirable attributes of the workforce and careful planning to acquire and/or develop those attributes. Organisational leadership should be embedded within the governing and management system and not be solely reliant on individual staff.

Criteria for consideration
- The staff profile is showing an appropriate mix of full-time/part-time, teaching/non-teaching, academic/practitioners, and staff at different stages of their career development.
- Staff members are active in research, publication, consultancy, or other professional/scholarly activities.
- The operator identified a relevant set of measures of teaching effectiveness and applied them effectively to inform staff appraisal and development.
- Staff engagement is high in programme planning, development and review processes.
- There are mechanisms, such as co-teaching, to facilitate exchange of experience and skills between staff members.

Possible sources of evidence

(The following are only some examples for illustrating the nature of evidence. More examples will be provided in the final version.)
- Staffing plan for the next five years to show the sufficiency of staff for supporting the development of the discipline / programme area
- Staff statistics throughout the validity period, including number of staff at different ranks in the discipline / organisation and indicators such as full-time to part-time staff ratio, staff turnover / retention rate, and teaching staff-to-learner ratio to demonstrate the adequacy and stability of staff
- Staff development activities undertaken throughout the validity period to show the implementation of staff development plan
- …

Domain PR-3: Programme Area Development and Management

Accreditation Standard

Operators must demonstrate at the organisational level that the processes for programme development (including approval) and review, as well as the formulation of strategic plans at both the organisational and programme area levels are linked and continue to remain effective to meet its educational/training objectives within the approved programme area(s).

For assessment of this standard, the operator is required, as a minimum, to:

PR-3.1   demonstrate the effectiveness of learning programme design in terms of level, coherence, balance and progression.

PR-3.2   demonstrate the continuing effectiveness of learning programme and learner assessment in relation to the intended learning outcomes within the programme area(s).

PR-3.3   demonstrate that the learning programmes remain current and valid in the light of developments in the related field of disciplines, industries or professions.

PR-3.4   have appropriately benchmarked the outcome standards and quality with the claimed QF level(s), with organisations or learning programmes in a similar context.

PR-3.5   demonstrate that the programme development (including approval) and review processes have been consistently implemented within the programme area(s).

Why this accreditation standard is important
This standard aims to ensure that the operator takes programme area development as a long-term undertaking. Effective alignment of all planning activities is essential for ensuring successful development of programme areas. This kind of alignment happens at the level of strategic planning where decisions on resources and priorities are made. Appropriateness of programme area development would be recognised by the learners, employers, academic/industry partners and the community at large.

Criteria for consideration
- Depending on the purpose of benchmarking decided, the appropriate benchmarking methodology is adopted accordingly. Results of benchmarking are considered at the right level(s) for improvement actions.
- External quality assurance, accreditation or professional recognition confirmed the quality of learning programmes, including and attainment of learning outcomes.
- Admission profile and ratio of applicants to planned places showed that the learning programmes in the approved programme area(s) have high demand.
- Programme planning within the approved programme area(s) promptly responded to new opportunities and challenges, supported by adequate financial and resource planning.
- Strong ties and/or collaborations have been established between the approved programme area(s) and the relevant disciplines, industries or professions.
- Learners, alumni and staff achievements from the approved programme area(s) received recognitions from the relevant disciplines, industries or professions.

Possible sources of evidence

(The following are only some examples for illustrating the nature of evidence. More examples will be provided in the final version.)
- Academic / Programme Development Plan including direction, targets, implementation strategies, actions, timeline, and key performance indicators for the next five years to show its alignment with the organisational strategic plan
- Programme Plan for the next five years to show its alignment with the organisational strategic plan, academic / programme development plan of the discipline and scope of the programme area(s)
- Research on trends in the discipline / programme area to support the academic / programme development plan
- …

Domain PR-4: Management of Resources and Services

Accreditation Standard

Operators must demonstrate that, within the approved programme area(s), the mechanisms for deployment of resources and services continue to be effective to meet the educational/training objectives, as a result of implementing organisational resource allocation policies and financial budgets.

For assessment of this standard, the operator is required, as a minimum, to:

PR-4.1   demonstrate the effectiveness of its resource planning, covering human, financial, physical and information resources.

PR-4.2   demonstrate that its financial resource plans are effective to ensure the sustainability of the delivery of their learning programmes meeting the educational/training objectives. Decisions on such plans are made with the support of relevant and sufficient data and information.

PR-4.3   demonstrate that decisions on the allocation of resources to support teaching, learning and assessment within the programme area(s) have taken into account feedback obtained through various channels, with a view to long-term development of its learning programmes.

PR-4.4   demonstrate that feedback from users on the quality and adequacy of learning, teaching and enabling resources is regularly collected and acted upon, and used to inform future planning.

PR-4.5   demonstrate that adequate learner support services have been identified and provided, informed by programme planning and analysis of characteristics of learners.

Why this accreditation standard is important
This standard aims to ensure that educational/training resources must be available and suitable to ensure effective learning, teaching and assessment on an on-going basis. This requires careful planning to ensure that funding is available, development/procurement is timely and training on applying resources in learning/teaching is provided to learners and staff. Within an organisation, resources are typically shared and therefore coordination and scheduling are required to maximise the utilisation and cost effectiveness of resources, and to minimise the impacts on the availability and/or quality of resources

Criteria for consideration
- Appropriate resource allocation has been made to ensure adequate learning and teaching resources be provided to the learners for the purpose of effective and independent learning. Such support may include but not limited to library resources, teaching accommodation, laboratories and other workshop facilities and access to information technology resources.
- Appropriate technologies, and reporting tools, are adopted to support resource planning.
- Appropriate learner support services are available that meet the needs of the learners.
- Suitable technologies are deployed to provide timely feedback to learners and staff.

Possible sources of evidence

(The following are only some examples for illustrating the nature of evidence. More examples will be provided in the final version.)
- Summary of enhancements made to facilities and equipment available to learners throughout the validity period to demonstrate the sufficiency and quality of physical resources
- Utilisation rates throughout the validity period to show the sufficiency of key facilities
- Overview of facilities and equipment currently available to learners, including library resources, laboratories, and workshop facilities
- …

Domain PR-5: Quality Assurance and Enhancement

Accreditation Standard

Operators must demonstrate its on-going maintenance of an effective quality assurance system for ensuring the quality and standards of its learning programmes, aligning with its educational/training objectives and the stated QF level(s).

For assessment of this standard, the operator is required, as a minimum, to:

PR-5.1   demonstrate that the policies on admission, assessment, measurement of quality of learning outcome, programme approval, staff quality, review and feedback mechanism, resources and support facilities at organisational level are effective and relevant to the approved programme area(s).

PR-5.2   demonstrate that new policies and procedures in regard to the approved programme area(s) are approved through appropriate processes, and implemented through involvement of internal and external personnel as appropriate.

PR-5.3   demonstrate that systems and structures are effective in benchmarking and ensuring the operating learning programmes and new learning programmes developed within the approved programme area(s) meet the expected QF standards.

PR-5.4   demonstrate that feedback from stakeholders has resulted in improvement actions for the approved programme area(s) and organisational effectiveness.

PR-5.5   demonstrate that staff members responsible for managing, delivering and assessing the learning programmes are taking effective actions to address weaknesses, build on strengths, and generally develop a culture of continuous improvement.

Why this accreditation standard is important
This standard aims to ensure that quality assurance of the operator at the organisational level focuses on evaluating how effective it is in accomplishing its vision and mission and achieving its educational/training objectives, through an on-going, evidence-based and participatory self-reflection process. This is to ensure that the organisation is responding to changes, enhancing its effectiveness and is focused on quality, in pursuit of its organisational aims.

Criteria for consideration
- Appropriate evidence, both direct and indirect, is systematically collected, analysed and interpreted to inform quality assurance decisions in a timely manner.
- Findings from quality assurance activities are fully discussed at the right level(s) and acted upon if necessary.
- The governing and management bodies routinely receive reports on effectiveness of improvement actions.
- The governing and management bodies have made it a priority to monitor the effectiveness of quality assurance, and the alignment between its vision and mission, educational/training objectives and offerings.
- The quality assurance system ensures its integrity and objectivity by engaging external input and incorporating checks-and-balances between those who take actions and those who review actions.

Possible sources of evidence

(The following are only some examples for illustrating the nature of evidence. More examples will be provided in the final version.)
- Selected learning programmes to demonstrate the implementation of the quality assurance mechanism related to programme quality and the quality of the learner learning experience
- Samples of programme review reports to show the effectiveness of the programme review process
- Samples of assessment papers, marking schemes and marked scripts of selected learning programmes to demonstrate the effectiveness of the assessment policies in ensuring the learning programmes meet the QF standard
- …

Appendix I: Ordinances, Policies, Other Relevant Standards and Guidelines

1. **Award Titles Scheme:**
   https://www.hkqf.gov.hk/en/KeyFeatures/ats/index.html

2. **Cap. 320 Post Secondary Colleges Ordinance:**
   https://www.elegislation.gov.hk/hk/cap320!en@2007-07-01T00:00:00?p0=1&p1=1

3. **Cap. 592 Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications Ordinance:**
   https://www.elegislation.gov.hk/hk/cap592!en@2016-05-27T00:00:00?p0=1&p1=1

4. **Common Descriptors for Associate Degree and Higher Diploma Programmes:**
   http://www.cspe.edu.hk/content/Resources-CommonDesc?lang=EN

5. **Credit Accumulation and Transfer:**
   https://www.hkqf.gov.hk/en/KeyFeatures/cat/index.html

6. **Generic Level Descriptors:**
   https://www.hkqf.gov.hk/filemanager/en/content_13/HKQF_GLD_e.pdf

7. **Hong Kong Qualifications Framework:**
   https://www.hkqf.gov.hk/

8. **List of Specification of Competency Standards:**
   https://www.hkqf.gov.hk/en/scs/scs/index.html

9. **List of Specification of Generic (Foundation) Competencies:**
   https://www.hkqf.gov.hk/en/scs/sgc/index.html

10. **QF Credit:**
    https://www.hkqf.gov.hk/en/KeyFeatures/credit/index.html

11. **Qualifications Guidelines for SCS-based / SGC-based Courses:**
    https://www.hkqf.gov.hk/filemanager/en/content_74/QG%20revised_E_2014.08.pdf