

## 4. Programme Area Accreditation

### Self-evaluation for PAA

4.1 Operators are requested to complete a critical and comprehensive self-evaluation before undertaking PAA. The purpose of the self-evaluation is for the Operator to assess its own readiness to meet the PAA standards, and to explore potential avenues where further improvement/ enhancement can be made. Based on the findings of the self-evaluation, the Operator should implement the necessary improvement and changes to its structure, policies and process. It is important to note that PAA is conducted by HKCAAVQ on the basis that the Operator concerned undertakes self-evaluation, as part of its regular internal quality assurance process, on an on-going basis. The self-evaluation process provides the basis of an Accreditation Document for HKCAAVQ's external quality assurance exercise.

### Suggestions for Conducting Self-evaluation

4.2 Self-evaluation lies at the heart of quality assurance processes, whether at the institutional level, programme area management or individual programme level. In the self-evaluation process, an Operator should evaluate its policies and processes, its performance and the effectiveness of its internal quality assurance at institutional and programme area levels. The process should be constructive with a view to identifying strengths and weaknesses, formulating improvement plans, and instituting enhancement.

4.3 It is advised that the process involves personnel at senior management and programme area levels, senior staff responsible for quality assurance, and other staff members who are involved in or may be affected by any changes brought about by the PAA. It is always a good practice to involve external stakeholders, as well as advisers, learners and employers in the self-evaluation. The duration of the self-evaluation stage depends on the circumstances of individual Operators.

4.4 The self-evaluation provides an opportunity for an Operator to reflect on key questions such as:

- What are the purposes/ objectives and outcomes of its education and training provision? (What does it want to achieve?)
- What are the processes and activities to support the achievement of its purposes and outcomes? (How does it achieve them?)

- What are the indicators of success? (What outcomes have been achieved? How does it know it is doing well and let others know too?)
- How does it seek feedback and adjust itself for its future performance so as to ensure continuous enhancement at both the institutional and programme area levels? (How does it apply what it knows?)

## **Initial Consultation**

4.5 In applying for PAA, Operators should prepare and define the scope of the proposed programme area(s) and consult HKCAAVQ at least six months before submitting the formal application for PAA.

## **Accreditation Document**

4.6 The purpose of PAA is to determine whether Operators have well-balanced and robust internal systems to assure and self-monitor the quality of their own learning programmes. This assessment will be based on Operators' track record of developing and delivering their accredited learning programmes, and self-monitoring and assuring the standards of those programmes within the defined scope of the programme area.

4.7 Operators are advised to structure the Accreditation Document so as to address the accreditation standard of each domain. The Accreditation Document should provide background information relevant to the accreditation standard, present the findings of the self-evaluation, and incorporate documentary evidence to support the findings.

4.8 When preparing the Accreditation Document, the Operator is expected to enclose what it has been using for management purposes on a daily operational basis as evidence to support the analysis in the Accreditation Document. Documentary evidence with regard to each accreditation standard should also include review procedures and mechanisms employed for continuous improvement.

4.9 The Accreditation Document should be presented in 2 parts: a Main Submission and Supporting Materials. As a rule of thumb, the document should be self-contained, include key facts and make cross references to data in supporting documents, with clear indication of the relevant parts in the supporting documents from which reference is drawn. It should also be analytical using the supporting materials to support the finding and claims as to how the standards are met and the enhancement initiatives planned.

4.10 The onus of providing sufficient and appropriate documentary evidence lies with the Operator. In preparing evidence, the emphasis should be put on the quality and relevance of the evidence and not on the quantity. The following suggestions are for reference only, and are not meant to be exhaustive. As Operators are diverse in nature and adopt different operational modes, it is likely that their documentation also differs. It is important that Operators provide evidence to demonstrate the implementation of the policies and processes and their effectiveness.

## 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.

### Possible Sources of Evidence

- Vision and mission statements of the Operator
- Regulations, statutes or other instruments relevant to institutional governance
- The latest Annual Reports or similar official publications
- Organisational and management structures
- Roles and responsibilities of key management personnel
- Institutional governance structure:
  - Interrelationship between governing body and its committees
  - Terms of reference
  - Composition
  - Membership
  - Delegations schedules
  - Examples of decision-making, i.e. minutes and notes
- Policies relating to the management of the education and training provision
- Reporting mechanism among the various functions within the Operator, including governance, management and QA
- Enhancement initiatives for governance, management and QA
- Meeting minutes of the governing bodies showing their discussion on various reviews conducted, including the follow-up actions arising from the reviews

## Domain PAA-2: Strategic Planning and Development

### Accreditation Standard

The operator must have formal processes at organisational level 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 its learning programmes.

### Possible Sources of Evidence

- Strategic plan of the Operator for the next five years
- Meeting minutes of the governing bodies and senior management showing their discussion on the formulation and implementation of the strategic plan
- Annual Reports or similar official publications
- Process for strategic planning
- Needs analysis in support of the strategic plans

- Considerations of external feedback in setting the strategic plan
- Policy and procedures for addressing new educational developments (e.g. employability of graduates, credit accumulation and transfer, etc.)
- Resource plans in support of the strategic plans
- Implementation/ Action plan underpinning the strategic plan, including targets, strategies, key performance indicators, timeline, etc.
- Mechanism for monitoring and reviewing implementation of the strategic plans
- Evidence of external feedback collected in assessing the Operator's strategic positioning and alignment of purposes, objectives and actions
- Quantitative and/or qualitative performance indicators
- Periodic planning process
- Reports on achievements/ outcomes of implementing the strategic plans
- Findings from the needs analysis in support of the periodic planning
- Internal and external feedback incorporated in the periodic planning process

### 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 enables it to meet its educational/ training objectives.**

#### Possible Sources of Evidence

- Policies and mechanism relating to financial management, financial control and budgeting of the education and training provision
- Policy on deployment of resources
- Resource plans in support of the strategic plans
- Audited financial statements of the Operator for the past three years
- Budget of the current year
- Latest management accounts
- Financial projections for the next five years
- Meeting minutes of the governing bodies and senior management showing their discussion on and approval of the budgets/ financial plans and resource allocation
- Meeting minutes of the governing bodies and senior management showing their discussion on and decisions made to the monitoring of the Operator's finances
- Approved budgets for learning programme(s) in relevant programme area(s)
- Priorities for programme development as set out by the Operator
- Meeting minutes of the governing bodies and senior management showing their discussion on and decisions made to the finance/ budget of the Operator for programme development/ operation
- Review mechanisms for financial planning
- Meeting minutes of the governing bodies and senior management showing their discussion on and decisions made to the reviews on financial planning
- Key performance indicators for financial sustainability
- Records showing the achievement of the key performance indicators for financial sustainability
- Records showing the follow-up actions identified/ taken for the improvement of financial planning

## Domain PAA-4: Organisational Quality Assurance and Enhancement

### Accreditation Standard

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

### Possible Sources of Evidence

- Policies on QA relevant to the education and training provision
- Terms of reference of the relevant committee(s) responsible for planning, operation and review
- Examples showing that quality is embedded in the planning, operational and review processes
- Terms of reference, composition and membership of the committee(s) responsible for monitoring and reviewing organisational performance
- Process and procedures for monitoring and reviewing organisational performance
- Meeting minutes of the relevant committee(s) showing their discussion on the organisational performance and the examples of evidence being considered by the relevant committees in decision-making process
- Policies on programme development
- Programme development processes showing the procedures of applying GLD in developing programmes in the programme area
- \*Selected programmes in the programme area to demonstrate the Operator's capability in developing programmes within the programme area that meet the claimed QF level(s) and quality standards
- Track record of successfully developing and delivering accredited learning programme(s) in the programme area
- Records for benchmarking programmes against the industry/ community standards and the relevant QF levels
- Process and procedures for approving, monitoring and reviewing of programmes
- Records showing the review on learners learning experience and on quality and effectiveness of programmes
- Mechanism/ tools for designing outcome-based programmes and determining QF levels
- Statistics of the programmes in the programme area, including retention rate, drop-out rates, pass rate, graduation rate, etc.
- Learner survey results, including satisfaction on learning experience, teaching staff performance, programme content and assessment, etc.
- Graduate survey results, including education/ career pathways, attainment of professional qualifications, and employment for graduates of the programmes in the programme area
- Policy and QA measures for collaborative arrangements with partners within and/or outside the organisation
- Records showing discussion on the learning outcomes of and enhancements made to the programmes in the programme area review mechanisms for QA system
- Meeting minutes of the governing bodies and senior management showing their discussion on and decisions made to the reviews on QA
- Key performance indicators for QA
- Records showing the achievement of the key performance indicators for QA
- Records showing the follow-up actions identified/ taken for the improvement of QA

\* Selected programme(s) – The appropriate number of selected programme(s) will vary depending on the size and nature of Operators and the Programme Area(s) seeking accreditation. Operators may discuss the number of selected programme(s) with Case Officers.

## Domain PAA-5: 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.**

### Possible Sources of Evidence

- Scope of and rationale for the programme area with reference to the Classification of Areas of Study and Training in the Qualifications Register (QR), List of Sub-areas and Illustrative Scope Statements in the HKCAAVQ website
- Track record of successfully developing and delivering accredited programme(s) in the programme area
- Five-year plan for developing the programme area, including offering new programmes
- Appointment criteria and roles and responsibilities for staff performing leadership roles in the programme and in the programme area
- Profile(s) of the existing and potential staff performing leadership roles in the programme and in the programme area
- Development initiatives specific for staff performing leadership roles in the programme and in the programme area
- Examples of the initiatives in the development plan that underpin the strategic and programme area plans of the Operator
- Examples of the initiatives in the development plan that create synergy within and across the proposed programme area
- Policy, process and procedures on teach-out arrangements for cessation of programmes
- Indicators adopted in the programme development process for identifying the needs of the programmes in the programme area

## Domain PAA-6: Learning, Teaching and Assessment

### 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, and learning support.**

### Possible Sources of Evidence

- Profiles of learners admitted to the programmes in the programme area
- Analysis of learner admission profile
- Mechanism to track learners' performance
- Award classification and GPA distribution
- External Examiner reports
- Feedback mechanisms to collect data from stakeholders including learners and teaching staff
- Policies on learning, teaching and assessment, including support for workplace attachment
- Learning, teaching and assessment activities provided to learners, including workplace learning/ placement
- Ratio of teaching staff to learners
- Findings from learner survey and graduate survey on learner learning experience
- Major improvements made to the quality of learners learning experience in the past three years
- Development plan for the programme area
- Programme development processes and procedures to ensure alignment of learning outcomes, learning and teaching activities and assessments
- Meeting minutes of the programme management team showing their discussion and review on the effectiveness of the learning and teaching and assessment strategies
- Programme information contained in the programme brochure, Operator's website, e-learning platform, etc.
- Agreements with workplace learning/ placement providers

## Domain PAA-7: Staffing and Staff Development

### Accreditation Standard

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

### Possible Sources of Evidence

- Appointment criteria for staff with different capacities and at different ranks
- Profile of staff in education and training provision (including quality assurance, teaching/ training, administrative and support staff)
- Number of staff across different ranks (including quality assurance, teaching/ training, administrative and support staff)
- Roles and responsibilities of staff with different capacities and at different ranks
- Staffing plan for the next five years underpinning the development plan of the programme area
- Policy and procedures for staff recruitment, deployment, appraisal, promotion and dismissal
- Policy on teaching staff workload and teaching staff-to-learner ratio
- Policy on staff engagement in research activities
- Staff Handbook
- Processes and procedures for evaluating and enhancing teaching effectiveness in the programme area
- Findings of teaching performance in learner survey
- Feedback mechanism to teaching staff about their teaching performance
- Policy on staff development and support



- Processes and procedures for identifying the development needs of staff in pedagogy and assessment design
- Staff development activities relating to pedagogy and assessment design in the past three years and a plan for the next five years
- List of continuous professional development activities that staff have been participated in the past three years

## Domain PAA-8: Programme Area Resources and Services

### 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 planned development of the proposed programme area.**

### Possible Sources of Evidence

- Procedures of identifying needs of resources in the development plan of the programme area
- Policies and procedures for procurement and acquisition of resources
- Policy on deployment of resources for ensuring their effective allocation
- Financial plan underpinning the development of the programme area
- Policy and processes for resource planning at programme area level
- Terms of reference, composition and membership of the committee(s) responsible for resource planning
- Meeting minutes/ records of the committee(s) responsible for resource planning
- Records showing engagement of key stakeholders in resource planning
- Overall learner capacity of campus(es)
- Overview of facilities and equipment for the programme in the programme area
- Current and projected utilisation rate of key facilities and equipment of the existing programmes in the programme area
- Mechanisms for reviewing the adequacy/ effective use of facilities
- Procurement plan for key facilities and equipment to support the development of the programme area
- Mechanism for deployment of resources
- Policy on learner support services
- Overview of learner support services at institutional level (e.g. counselling, career guidance, academic support and mentoring, online learning system, learner amenities, financial aid and scholarship)
- Overview of learner support services at programme area level (e.g. academic support, mentoring scheme and workplace learning)
- Learner Handbook
- Mechanisms for reviewing the adequacy/ effectiveness of learner support services