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

Manual for Institutional Review for UAS (IR-UAS)

(For the Purpose of Qualifying as University of Applied Sciences)

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1. Introduction

1.1 The Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications (HKCAAVQ) was established under the Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications Ordinance (Cap.1150). Under section 4(1)(a)(i) of Cap.1150, HKCAAVQ may conduct accreditation tests generally or as authorised under any other local enactment. The Education Bureau (EDB) has commissioned HKCAAVQ for conducting Institutional Review for University of Applied Sciences (IR-UAS) and endorsed the criteria and process for IR-UAS developed by HKCAAVQ.

1.2 Institutions that request HKCAAVQ to conduct an IR for the purpose of qualifying as a university of applied sciences (UAS) for approval by the Education Bureau should use this Manual, namely the *Manual for Institutional Review for University of Applied Sciences* (the *IR-UAS Manual*), which serves as the guiding document for such institutions, the review panel engaged by HKCAAVQ, and the review process of HKCAAVQ.

1.3 Specifically, the *IR-UAS Manual* serves various purposes, including: (i) to outline the purposes, terms of reference, and the guiding principles for the IR-UAS; (ii) to introduce the IR-UAS criteria; and (iii) to explain the IR process and procedures to ensure a common understanding of roles and responsibilities of all parties.

1.4 The *IR-UAS Manual* is a living document and it is subject to regular reviews and updates by EDB and HKCAAVQ in order to support the ultimate achievement of all objectives in establishing UAS and the changing needs and education landscape.

2. Universities of Applied Sciences in Hong Kong

Background

2.1 The HKSAR Government has been promoting the development of vocational and professional education and training (VPET) as a pathway parallel to conventional academic education, adopting the strategy of fostering industry-institution collaboration and diversified development (職學聯通，多元發展) in promoting VPET at different levels.

2.2 The promotion of VPET development not only responds to the keen manpower needs of Hong Kong but also echoes the national strategies of strengthening the role and status of vocational education, encouraging the articulation between vocational and academic studies (職普融通), further integration of industries and education and the cooperation between institutions and enterprises (產教融合、校企合作), and nurturing higher quality talent with applied knowledge and skills.

2.3 As announced in the Chief Executive's 2023 Policy Address, to further raise the status of VPET at degree level, the Government would press ahead with the development of UASs. Generally speaking, UASs aims to nurture students with applied skills and knowledge that are able to meet the manpower needs of the industries, thereby creating impetus for Hong Kong's development, and at the same time providing an alternative pathway to success in professional skills sectors for young people. To this end, UASs should carry a number of essential characteristics.

2.4 The establishment of UASs leverages and complements the Hong Kong Qualifications Framework (HKQF). The high level VPET programmes provided by UASs, including but not limited to applied degree programmes, are recognised under HKQF with the same QF levels as traditional academic programmes. Specifically, same as conventional universities, UASs should possess the maturity and capability of providing degree programmes pitching at QF Levels 5-7[1], and in particular applied degree programmes that blend theory and practice and with substantial workplace learning and assessment elements.

2.5 To support the development of the VPET pathway, UASs should adopt

[1] Both applied degrees and academic degrees include bachelor, master and doctoral degrees, which are pitched at QF Levels 5, 6 and 7 respectively.

innovative models in providing high level programmes with multiple entry and exit points and flexible admission requirements to cater for the diverse needs of the industries, and enable students with different background, aspirations and abilities to acquire work skills for the future, applied knowledge in innovation and technology, and critical soft skills. UASs should also have experience in providing high level VPET programmes with flexibilities in curriculum design, admission, delivery mode and recognition and support from industries and professions.

International Experiences

2.6 The development of this Manual has made reference to jurisdictions which have similar experiences in the development of higher education in vocational and professional context. Research was conducted on the corresponding development and establishment of UASs in other jurisdictions including Finland, Germany, Switzerland, Canada and the United Kingdom. Development of vocational and professional education and UASs related establishment and provisions on the Mainland China was also covered in the research.

Eligibility

2.7 Any self-financing post-secondary institution that wishes to qualify as a UAS should already have obtained a university title under the relevant legislation or in accordance with the Revised Roadmap with Criteria for Acquiring University Title by Post-secondary Colleges Registered under Post Secondary Colleges Ordinance (Cap. 320) promulgated by EDB in 2015 (as applicable).

2.8 Any self-financing post-secondary institution that wishes to qualify as a UAS should also demonstrate that it has the vision, commitment, capabilities and experience in operating an institution that embodies the key features of UAS, specifically –

(a) It should possess the vision, maturity and capability of providing high level VPET programmes pitching at QF Levels 5-7[2] that blend theory and practice and with substantial workplace learning and assessment, with flexibilities in curriculum design, admission, delivery mode and recognition and support from industries and professions.

(b) It should have the experience in developing and providing applied degree programme(s) at least in one area of applied sciences for which it has

[2] Both applied degrees and academic degrees include bachelor, master and doctoral degrees, which are pitched at QF Levels 5, 6 and 7 respectively.

attained the programme area accreditation or self-accrediting status. And

(c) it should also be committed to developing and providing more applied degree programme(s) in other areas of applied sciences, taking into account the characteristic features of such programmes and in accordance with the implementation guidance as stipulated in the *Guidelines in Developing Applied Degree Programmes* in Appendix 1.

Procedures for Making an Application to become a UAS

2.9 An applicant institution shall first make an application to EDB and demonstrate that it has already fulfilled the abovementioned eligibility requirements. EDB may also consider such applications in conjunction with the relevant institutions' application for a private university title where necessary and appropriate.

2.10 Upon receiving EDB's written confirmation of the above, the applicant institution shall then request HKCAAVQ to conduct IR-UAS based on the criteria set out in this document. IR-UAS will focus on whether a self-financing post-secondary institution has the commitment and competence to develop and deliver applied degree programmes with strong collaboration and recognition from industries. Subject to EDB's approval, HKCAAVQ may combine IR-UAS with the institutional review for the purpose of the relevant institutions' applications for becoming a private university where necessary and appropriate.

2.11 After a successful review, the final decision to determine whether the applicant institution is qualified for becoming a UAS rests with EDB.

2.12 An applicant institution having successfully qualified as a UAS should continue to maintain its registration / status under Cap. 320 and/or any other applicable legislation, and continue to meet the relevant standards and requirements for a self-financing university. The approval of programmes at degree level, including applied degree programmes, should continue to follow the prevailing requirements of EDB and the relevant legislations (e.g. Cap. 320). EDB and HKCAAVQ reserve the right to further specify the approval and quality assurance requirements in terms of the implementation of applied degree programmes.

Ongoing Reviews for UASs

2.13 UASs should ensure that its governance and management systems will support the provision of a learning environment, including workplace learning, with effective quality assurance measures and learner support for establishing and maintaining close industry collaboration and recognition. In the

development process, institutions may take time to attain further maturity and to pursue a higher level of collaboration and integration with industries, such as in the aspects of technology, product and service development.

2.14 UASs will be subject to Ongoing Reviews to demonstrate that their development, outcomes and maturity at both institutional and programme levels are consistent with the criteria prescribed in this Manual.

2.15 Schedule of an Ongoing Review will be aligned or combined, as far as possible, with a UAS's IR cycle, or quality review cycle by HKCAAVQ, where applicable. The scheduling of the Ongoing Review will be subject to mutually agreed arrangements between HKCAAVQ and the UAS, but in any case, it should be arranged no later than 3 years after the first IR-UAS. Thereafter, Ongoing Reviews will be conducted within a 6-year cycle.

Monitoring of UASs

2.16 UASs should submit annual progress reports to EDB[3]. Information and data relevant to their roles as UASs should be included, and there should be analyses of the relevant data to delineate their development, planning and outcomes as UASs.

2.17 It is also the responsibility of UASs to inform EDB and HKCAAVQ of any significant change which might have an impact on their continued competence to meeting the criteria of IR-UAS.

[3] Self-financing universities are required to submit annual reports to the Government in accordance with the relevant regimes. For instance, private universities registered under Cap. 320 are required to submit annual progress reports together with audited financial reports to EDB, according to the Revised Roadmap with Criteria for Acquiring University Title by Post-secondary Colleges Registered under Cap. 320 (by EDB) and the Institutional Review Manual for Private University Title (by HKCAAVQ). UASs may combine the required annual progress reports for UAS in their annual reports to be submitted to EDB.

3. Purpose of IR-UAS

3.1 IR-UAS focuses on the commitment and competence of the self-financing post-secondary institution at the institutional and programme levels, with particular emphasis on:

(a) whether the institution has in its mission and objectives supporting the development of a UAS with commitment in developing corresponding institutional planning, mechanism and implementation measures to undertake the roles of a UAS in Hong Kong; and

(b) whether the institution has put in place a well-managed learning environment, including the workplace environment, embracing staffing, resources, and student support to achieve the objectives to become a UAS in Hong Kong; and

(c) whether the institution has established a strong foundation to develop close collaboration with and recognition from industries, professions and/or regulatory authorities for supporting the development and delivery of its applied degrees with successful outcomes.

3.2 The IR-UAS will be based on three criteria which are detailed in Section 6 of this Manual.

4. Terms of Reference

4.1 The scope of an IR-UAS is defined by the terms of reference as stipulated in the service agreement to be signed by both parties. The terms of reference are to:

(a) review the institutional commitment and competence in achieving the objectives as a university of applied sciences in Hong Kong and meeting the criteria of IR-UAS; and

(b) issue to the institution a report in the form of an IR Report in regard to (a) above.

5. Guiding Principles

HKCAAVQ applies the following guiding principles in conducting the IR-UAS:

Peer review

5.1 The principle of 'peer review' is implemented through the engagement of a panel of academic / professional experts who have expertise and/or experience in institutional governance / management and/or quality assurance of institutions. The role of the IR panel is to review and evaluate evidence to assess the commitment and competence of the institution, and form a judgment in respect of the criteria set out in this Manual. Details of the roles and responsibilities of panel members in an IR are listed in Appendix 2.

Standard-based

5.2 HKCAAVQ has developed the IR-UAS criteria, provided in Chapter 6 of this Manual, which collectively set out the requirements for a self-financing post-secondary institution to be qualified as a UAS.

Evidence-based

5.3 The IR process is 'evidence-based'. This means that the IR panel conducts the review and forms a judgment with reference to evidence provided by an institution to support its claims to meeting the criteria required of a UAS.

Fitness for purpose

5.4 'Fitness for purpose' means that the IR panel will consider the approach of an institution in addressing its role as a UAS, and how the institution addresses the needs of industries and professions.

Transparency

5.5 The IR is conducted through a 'transparent' approach. An institution should provide full disclosure of information so that both the panel and the institution will have a common understanding of the relevant issues in the review. Throughout the IR process, the institution will have opportunities to respond to the panel's questions / comments.

Avoidance of conflict of interest

5.6 Panel members are required to abide by the HKCAAVQ Code of Conduct for Panels to avoid conflict of interest situations. The implementation of the Code is supported by a dual procedure for checking of potential conflict of interests. Prior to the confirmation of panel membership, both the potential panel members and the institution are asked to declare if potential panel members have any potential conflict of interests in regard to their participation in a particular IR exercise. An institution may inform HKCAAVQ of any potential conflicts of interest supported by reasons and explanations. HKCAAVQ will carefully consider the reasons, and make the final decision on panel membership. The HKCAAVQ Code of Conduct for Panels is in Appendix 3.

Confidentiality of information

5.7 All parties involved in the IR shall treat as proprietary and confidential any information or material made available to them either through HKCAAVQ or the institution if the information is not in the public domain. Such a duty of confidentiality is specified in the HKCAAVQ Code of Conduct for Panels which the panel members agree to abide by. Apart from panel members, participants in the site visit such as representatives of the institution and observers must not disclose the information gathered and views discussed with the panel during the site visit.

6. Criteria for IR-UAS

6.1 HKCAAVQ is commissioned by EDB to conduct IRs for the purpose of assessing applications made by self-financing higher education institutions to qualify as UASs in Hong Kong (IR-UAS). Reference should to made to the background, policy objectives and eligibility requirements set out in Section 2.

6.2 IR-UAS covers the following 3 domains of competence:

IR-1	Governance, management and quality assurance
IR-2	Learning environment and learner support
IR-3	Industry collaboration and recognition

6.3 For each domain, a criterion is prescribed on the commitment and competence expected of a self-financing higher education institution in fulfilling its roles as a UAS.

6.4 To demonstrate how a particular criterion is and will continue to be met, an institution is required to demonstrate its commitment and provide evidence that it regularly and systematically analyses its outcomes, takes appropriate improvement actions, and allocates sufficient resources to ensure effective management of its operations and enhancement of quality to fulfill its roles as a UAS.

6.5 The context statement under each domain describes the scope of the domain with the essential features underpinning the criterion and requirements.

6.6 The requirements under each domain elaborate on the expectations for meeting the criterion. As the establishment of UAS is a new initiative in Hong Kong, the institution may need to take time to develop further maturity in line with the development of a UAS and/or its applied degree programmes. Evidence of outcomes achieved may not be fully available at the time of the first IR. While the IR focuses on the commitment and the competence of the institution in supporting its development as a UAS at the point in time, the Ongoing Review requires evidence on the development, implementation and outcomes, as well as continuous commitment and enhancement of the institution as it matures.

6.7 A list of the Requirements for Ongoing Review is included to set out further requirements on the development and maturity of the institution in achieving its objectives and roles as a UAS. Instead of being a checklist, the

requirements are meant to provide guidance to institutions for preparing the submission and to assist the Panel in the review process.

IR-1 Governance, Management and Quality Assurance

Criterion

The institution should have its vision and mission supporting the development of a UAS. The governing body and senior management are committed to providing leadership and oversight of the quality and standards, in terms of academic and professional standards, of the education and training operations of a UAS.

Context

Governance and management of an institution should provide strategic leadership to create an academic environment which facilitates the development of a UAS with mechanisms embedded within the institution to bring close collaboration with industry and professions, and beyond.

Requirements

IR-1.1 The vision and mission of the institution should support the development of a UAS with strong collaborations with industry and professions at all levels.

IR-1.2 The governing body is committed to leading and being accountable for the development of a UAS.

IR-1.3 The senior management is committed to achieving the institutional objectives of a UAS with detailed planning for strategies, roadmap and timeline, and monitoring performances by means of effective quality assurance mechanisms and measures.

IR-1.4 The senior management is committed to developing new or enhancing existing mechanisms, where appropriate, to providing an academic environment for developing and delivering programmes with an applied focus for meeting the needs of industry and professions.

IR-1.5 The senior management is committed to engaging and developing adequate and relevant expertise to support the programme development, delivery and quality assurance to maintain the standards and achieve the roles of a UAS.

Requirements for Ongoing Review[4]

IR-1.6 The institution should have an institutional plan, which sets out the institutional direction and strategies, performance measures, and review mechanisms (as well as identification and management of risks), aligned with its vision and mission for supporting the development of a UAS.

IR-1.7 The institution should have mechanisms to collect and analyse relevant data to review and monitor the effectiveness of the implementation of the institution plan.

IR-1.8 The institution should have allocated resources to encourage applied research, in particular in collaboration with industries and professions, including for service and/or product development.

IR-1.9 The institution should have effective staffing policy and strategies to engage expertise from industries and professions at both programme management and delivery levels to support, review and maintain the programme standards and outcomes.

IR-1.10 The Institution should have staff development policy to support staff to acquire latest industry knowledge and skills, including but not limited to deploying staff for attachment to industries.

IR-1.11 The institution should have allocated adequate resources to support the delivery of all relevant outcomes, including outcomes to be achieved through work-based learning.

IR-1.12 The institution should have collected relevant data and conducted comprehensive reviews on its operation as a UAS, and identify areas for ongoing enhancements that are necessary for further carrying forward the roles of a UAS.

[4] These requirements are only applicable in the Ongoing Review.

IR-2 Learning Environment and Learner Support

Criterion

The institution should provide an effective learning environment, supported by appropriate physical infrastructure, adequate learner support services, relevant technologies and strong collaboration with industries, that is consistent with its objectives as a UAS. One of the key characteristics of this learning environment is the provision of meaningful and practical learning experiences in collaboration with industries while the learning environment, as a whole, prepares learners for success in vocational and professional careers.

Context

Learning environment refers to the physical infrastructure, the contexts, and cultures in which learners learn. An institution creates a high-quality learning environment ensuring that its resources are aligned with its educational objectives. These resources not only include financial, technological, research, access to information, equipment and campus facilities, but also cover aspects including student services, pastoral care, counselling services, learning support to nurture students' value, positive attitude on vocational and professional education, and lifelong learning. All of them work together in fostering their educational success and whole person development. All these elements constituting the learning environment should work together in supporting the development of a UAS.

Requirements

IR-2.1 The institution has access to the physical resources, including facilities, equipment, campus and other assets, necessary to support its educational provision in the chosen area(s) of applied sciences.

IR-2.2 The institution has programme development policy to facilitate flexibility in admission[5], curriculum design[6] and delivery, and provision of learning and work opportunities through work-based learning, internship and placement.

IR-2.3 The institution has effective mechanism to monitor the development and

[5] In addition to academic achievements, work experience and other forms of prior learning should also be duly recognised, so long as the students have the abilities to undertake and complete the programmes.

[6] Curriculum design of programmes should facilitate multiple-entry and multiple-exit points, duly taking into consideration the Specifications of Competency Standards (SCS) and Vocational Qualifications Pathway under HKQF and the development trends of VPET, such as micro-credentials.

implementation of applied degree programmes with reference to the specified characteristic features of such programmes (Appendix 1).

IR-2.4 The institution has mechanisms to adopt technologies relevant to industries and professions in programme development and delivery, and to guide the appropriate use of technology in learning.

IR-2.5 The institution has effective assessment policy for ensuring that graduates are suitably equipped with the knowledge, skills and experience, consistent with the programme objectives, learning outcomes and the roles of a UAS.

IR-2.6 The institution provides effective learner support services specific and relevant to its admission profile, including career development advice and workplace support and protection, and for preparing graduates to develop a career in the vocational and professional sectors.

Requirements for Ongoing Review[4]

IR-2.7 The institution regularly collects relevant data to monitor and evaluate the implementation of programmes, including and in particular the characteristic features of applied degree programmes, to ensure alignment with the roles of a UAS. Based on the evaluation outcomes, reflections should be made on the provision of learning environment and learner support, as well as the underpinning policies.

IR-2.8 The institution regularly monitors and evaluates the resources and services provided for its educational provision as a UAS, and takes necessary actions to timely address any gaps.

IR-2.9 The institution systematically monitors learners' learning progress, particularly employers' feedback, to identify learners at risk and provide appropriate support in collaboration with industries and professions.

IR-2.10 The institution has dedicated mechanisms, resources and measures to support, monitor and evaluate the work-based learning components in programmes to ensure and reflect on close collaboration with industries and professions.

IR-3 Industry Collaboration and Recognition

Criterion

The institution should engage and collaborate with industries and professions at governance, programme and quality assurance levels in the provision of its programmes, including but not limited to higher education programmes at degree levels[1] (including applied degree programmes) pitching at QF Levels 5 to 7, as well as other programme types that address the needs of the target industries or professions.

Context

To provide students with access to the target industries or professions, institutions have to maintain close collaboration with them and continuously look for opportunities to help students obtain recognition of and support from the target industries or professions and relevant regulatory authorities. Institutions should collaborate with industries or professions in the design, delivery and assessment of programmes, as well as provision of work-based learning experiences and where appropriate assessment at workplace. Recognition of industries and professions is essential to provide students with an access to the target career.

Requirements

IR-3.1 The institution is committed to developing close industry connections and collaborations for building a strong network with relevant stakeholders in supporting and maintaining the edge of the programmes as highly relevant to the target industries or professions. It is also committed to developing plans to work with industries and professions for service and/or product development and applied research.

IR-3.2 The institution has plans to engage the participation of members from industry and professions at governance level to support the development and oversight of strategies in engaging industries and professions.

IR-3.3 The institution has plans or mechanisms to solicit industry engagement in the provision of work-based learning, as well as their participation in programme design, delivery and assessment to ensure the programmes are meeting their needs.

Requirements for Ongoing Review[4]

IR-3.4 The institution receives strong support and recognition from industries, professions, and/or regulatory authorities at all levels.

IR-3.5 The institution demonstrates close collaborations with industries and professions in the context of articulating graduates to employment by the employers.

IR-3.6 The institution demonstrates outcomes of the collaborations with industries and professions on service and/or product development and applied research in chosen area(s).

IR-3.7 The institution collaborates with industries and professions on developing and delivering tailor-made or commissioned programmes to address their needs.

IR-3.8 The institution conducts systematic analyses on graduate destinations to demonstrate that its programmes (including applied degree programmes) are highly relevant and well-received by the target industries or professions.

IR-3.9 The institution has in place staff recruitment and development plan and strategies to engage industry practitioners to engage in the teaching and delivery of relevant subjects and also to ensure that teaching staff have a close connection with the industries so that they can be kept updated on the industry development.

7. The Review Process

7.1 The main stages of an IR exercise include Preparation, Submission, Review and Reporting are listed below. An indicative timeline is in Appendix 4.

Preparation

Conducting Self-review

7.2 An institution is strongly recommended to complete a critical and comprehensive self-evaluation in preparation of the IR. The self-evaluation may either be a stand-alone evaluation or base on the institution's ongoing internal review activities. The self-evaluation should incorporate relevant information including qualitative data, quantitative data on student outcomes and stakeholders feedback collected. Its purpose is for the institution to assess itself in relation to the IR criteria, and to identify strengths and areas of improvement / enhancement.

Initiating the Process

7.3 An institution shall first make an application to EDB and demonstrate that it has already fulfilled the eligibility requirements set out in paragraphs 2.7 and 2.8 above[7].

7.4 Upon receiving EDB's written confirmation of the above, the applicant institution shall then request HKCAAVQ to conduct IR-UAS based on the criteria set out in this document through a written request to or through a meeting with HKCAAVQ. HKCAAVQ will liaise with the institution in determining the time schedule for the exercise. Upon agreeing on the time schedule, HKCAAVQ will issue a Service Agreement setting out the terms of reference, time schedule and fee for the exercise.

Submission

7.5 The institution is advised to follow the broad guidelines below to structure the Submission.

Part A: Main Submission

The suggested structure of the Main Submission is:

[7] Subject to EDB's approval, an applicant institution may request HKCAAVQ to conduct a combined Institutional Review for the purposes of making an application for a private university title and for qualifying as a UAS.

Introduction: a brief introduction to the institution, such as its origin and milestones of its development, vision and mission statements, staff and student population and breadth of programme provisions. Focus should be placed on demonstrating the institution's commitment and competence in undertaking the roles of a UAS.

Each chapter should include an evaluation of how the criteria are met and will continue to be met, the main strengths and areas of enhancement required in the course of development towards further maturity, and how these issues will be addressed. This analysis should be supported by relevant evidence.

Chapter 1: Governance, Management and Quality Assurance

Chapter 2: Learning Environment and Learner Support

Chapter 3: Industry Collaboration and Recognition

Chapter 4: Experience of operating Applied Degree programme(s)

Conclusion: a summary of strengths for qualifying as a UAS and areas of improvement towards further development and maturity

Part B: Supplementary Materials

Supporting materials to substantiate the evaluation and outcomes presented in the Main Submission.

Review of Submission

Forming the Panel

7.6 One of the guiding principles in the IR process is 'peer review'. HKCAAVQ engages academic and professional experts who have the expertise and/or experience in institutional governance / management and/or quality assurance of academic institutions to be members of the panel. The panel comprises a Panel Chair, Panel Member(s) and the Panel Secretary. The *Roles and Responsibilities of Panels* is included in Appendix 2.

7.7 To ensure panel members have no conflict of interests in participating in the IR exercise, specialists invited to engage in the exercise as panel members have to declare that there is no potential conflict of interests and confirm that they agree to abide by the *HKCAAVQ Code of Conduct for Panels* (Appendix 3).

7.8 HKCAAVQ then sends the list of potential panel members to the institution

for checking of potential conflict of interest. After the institution has cleared the list, HKCAAVQ makes the final decision to confirm with the appointment of the Panel for the exercise.

Review of Institutional Submission by Panel

7.9 When the submission from the institution is received, HKCAAVQ will send it to the panel for review. The panel will review the Submission, and provide comments on it. The comments may include requests for clarification on particular parts of the Submission and/or requests for additional information or supporting documents. The Panel Secretary, who is a Case Officer of HKCAAVQ, will consolidate the requests for further information, if any, and send to the institution for response.

Panel's meeting

7.10 After receiving the response from the Institution, the Panel will meet and review all the submissions and the additional information received with reference to the terms of reference of the exercise and the criteria listed in the Manual. The review is primarily conducted as a paper-based exercise. A site visit may be conducted if deemed essential. If a site visit is needed, the Panel will decide the scope and focus of the visit. The Panel Secretary will then liaise with the Institution for arrangements.

Reporting

7.11 The outcome of the IR will be presented in an IR Report issued by HKCAAVQ. The rationale for the Panel's recommendation together with the supporting evidence obtained throughout the IR process will be documented in the IR Report. The IR Report also includes HKCAAVQ's determination as to whether the Institution meets the IR-UAS criteria after consideration of the Panel's recommendation.

7.12 The draft IR Report will be sent to the Institution for checking of factual accuracy. Upon confirmation of factual accuracy, the IR Report will be submitted to the Executive Director of HKCAAVQ for approval for issuance.

7.13 After the IR exercise is successfully completed, the Institution can follow the relevant procedures prescribed by EDB to further pursue its application for becoming a UAS to EDB. In all cases, it is the responsibility of the institution to provide further information or clarification as requested by EDB in support of the application.

8. Annual Progress Report

Purpose

8.1 A UAS should ensure that its governance and management systems will continue to support the provision of a learning environment with effective quality assurance measures and learner support for establishing and maintaining close industry collaboration and recognition after it has acquired the UAS branding. In the development process, the Institution should continue to explore and pursue attaining further maturity and a higher level of collaboration and integration with the industries, such as in the aspects of technology, product and service development.

8.2 All UASs should submit annual progress reports to EDB to enable EDB to observe and monitor its further development as UASs. Information and data relevant to their roles as UASs should be included, and there should be analyses of the relevant data to delineate their development, planning and outcomes as UASs[8].

8.3 The annual reporting period for self-financing universities follows the academic year in Hong Kong, i.e. from September to the following August. All UASs are required to submit annual progress reports to EDB according to the same reporting period each year.

Preparation for annual progress report

8.4 Universities may have different objectives, and their commitment and competence to achieve these objectives can be measured differently. As a UAS, it is important that the university includes in its annual progress reports an analysis of its performance against the commitment for achieving the aims and essential characteristics of UAS, and to demonstrate therein that its development and outcomes are consistent with the requirements of Ongoing Review, supported by baseline information described in para. 8.5 below, as well as any other relevant information.

8.5 The annual progress reports should provide the following information

[8] Self-financing universities are required to submit annual reports to the Government in accordance with the relevant regimes. For instance, private universities registered under Cap. 320 are required to submit annual progress reports together with audited financial reports to EDB, according to the Revised Roadmap with Criteria for Acquiring University Title by Post-secondary Colleges Registered under Cap. 320 (by EDB) and the Institutional Review Manual for Private University Title (by HKCAAVQ). UASs may combine the required annual progress reports for UAS in their annual reports to be submitted to EDB.

analysis:

(I) Baseline information

A. Information on Industry collaboration at Institutional level

- Industry collaboration:
  - Please provide details, if applicable, on industry practitioners being engaged as members of the programme committee, programme team and/or board of examiners.
  - Please provide details on engagement of expertise from the industries and professions at both programme management and delivery/implementation levels to support, review and maintain the programme standards and outcomes.
  - Please provide details, if applicable, on collaborations with the industries on applied research projects for service and/or product development.
- Work-based learning:
  - Please highlight the industry partners that have been engaged providing work-based learning opportunities including but not limited to in Hong Kong and the Greater Bay Area.
- Support measures:
  - Please provide details regarding the latest measures that have been implemented and being explored to support the successful and effective implementation of the existing and new applied degree programmes.

B. Programme Data

- Number of applied degree programmes offered during the reporting period
- For each of the applied degree programmes, details including –
  - Programme title
  - Launch year
  - Mode of study
  - Planned and actual intakes
  - Target industries / professions
  - Curriculum design per programme:
    - elaboration on how the curriculum contributes to the competitive edge of graduates in the respective industries;

        - percentage of contact hours allocated for work-based learning (including internship, applied projects and other types of work-based learning activities);
        - examples to illustrate how learning outcomes of the work-based learning are mapped with the workplace context as a specific feature of the programme;
        - courses that have included industry-based projects particularly involving industry professionals as project supervisors or project assessors in these projects; and
        - examples of partnership companies in the projects.
    - Admission requirements, including details on the approach used to assess prior learning for admission and/or exemption.
    - Recognition from industry, professions and regulatory authority:
        - details regarding the specific areas or types of support / recognition provided by the industry / profession;
        - details, if applicable, for academic staff to have engaged with the industry for the purpose of informing programme development and delivery;
        - details of involvement of industry and professions in programme delivery and/or assessment.
    - Learning and teaching technologies:
        - examples of how technologies used in the programme are aligned with those used in the workplace.

C. Student data

- For each of the applied degree programmes, details including –
    - Number of applications
    - Student load (FTE) and headcount
    - Number and percentage of annual admission via practical routes (e.g. RPL, work experience) at each level
    - Number of students admitted via Year 1, Year 2 and Year 3 entries

D. Outcome data

- Results of graduate destination surveys (or similar instruments) of applied degree programmes

- Results of student surveys (or similar instruments) relevant to UAS and applied degree programme implementation
- Completion rate per applied degree programme
- Attrition rate at each level per applied degree programme
- Number of students graduated with an exit award per applied degree programme

E. Other data

- Please provide details regarding the support measures necessary for the successful and effective implementation of the existing and new applied degree programmes.

(II) Analysis of data and follow-up plan

The UAS should provide an analysis of the information and data required in (I) above, together with any planned or proposed follow-up actions arising from the analysis. The analysis should cover its commitment and competence for the development, implementation and outcomes for achieving its roles as a UAS. The UAS should also provide revisions to major plans, such as institutional plans, since the IR-UAS exercise / last annual reporting, if any.

(III) Self-evaluation

A description and self-evaluation on the progress towards the plan and preparation for meeting the Requirements for Ongoing Review, specified under IR-1, IR-2 and IR-3 (pp. 15-20).

9. Approach to Quality Assurance for University of Applied Sciences

9.1 A self-financing university having successfully qualified as a UAS should continue to maintain its registration / status under Cap. 320 and/or any other applicable legislation, and continue to meet the relevant standards and requirements under the relevant regulatory regime.

9.2 A UAS is required to meet the criteria for IR-UAS on an on-going basis. The approval of programmes at degree level, including applied degree programmes, should continue to follow the prevailing requirements of EDB and the relevant legislations (e.g. Cap. 320). EDB and HKCAAVQ reserve the right to further specify the approval and quality assurance requirements in relation to the implementation of applied degree programmes.

Substantial Changes to University of Applied Sciences Status

9.3 A UAS is responsible for informing EDB and HKCAAVQ of any substantial change(s) which might have an impact on their continued competence to meeting the criteria of IR-UAS before any change is implemented. The UAS should consult EDB and HKCAAVQ on the need for approval of a substantial change(s) as soon as practicable, and prior to implementing any change(s). The assessment of substantial change(s) conducted by HKCAAVQ will be subject to a fee.

9.4 If HKCAAVQ identifies any issue(s) that may have an impact on the UAS's commitment, competence and compliance to meeting the IR-UAS criteria, HKCAAVQ may initiate an assessment and the outcomes of the assessment would be reported to EDB.

10. Fee for Institutional Review for UAS

10.1 HKCAAVQ is a statutory self-financed body. The fee for an IR-UAS exercise is per institution and will be set out in the Service Agreement to be signed between the institution and HKCAAVQ.

11. Review of HKCAAVQ Determination

11.1 As provided in section 17A of the HKCAAVQ Ordinance (Cap. 1150), an institution which is aggrieved by a determination of HKCAAVQ as stated in an IR-UAS Report may apply to HKCAAVQ for a review of the stated determination. All applications for review must be made on the designated Application Form and within 30 days of receipt of the IR-UAS Report. The Application Form for Review of Accreditation Determination and/or Decisions under Cap. 1150 is available on HKCAAVQ website.

11.2 The processing of an application for a review is governed by sections 17B to 17D of Cap. 1150.

Appendix 1

Guidelines in Developing Applied Degree Programmes[9]

1. Introduction

1.1 These guidelines are designed for institutions which are seeking to develop applied degree programmes.

1.2 The current document provides practical guidelines to institutions to incorporate the characteristic features of applied degree programmes in developing new / enhancing existing programmes.

1.3 These guidelines are subject to regular reviews and updates from time to time.

2. Positioning of Applied Degree Programmes

2.1 The development of applied degree programmes aims to respond to society's needs for professionals and talent who are competent in specialised skills in applied nature that are closely aligned with industries or professions and can be readily transferred to job settings.

2.2 Applied degree programmes are equal in standing as with other conventional degree programmes. Specially, for applied degree programmes at undergraduate level, they are pitched at QF Level 5, same as traditional bachelor's degree programmes. The development of applied degree programmes strengthens the vocational and professional education and training (VPET) articulation pathway, through enabling students with VPET background, such as learners and graduates of Applied Learning (ApL) subjects in the senior secondary education and higher diplomas at the sub-degree level, to have their relevant learning experiences duly recognised. The characteristic features of applied degree programmes will also be applicable to Master and Doctoral degrees at QF Levels 6 and 7 on fit for purpose basis.

2.3 Moreover, applied degree programmes are embedded with distinct and prominent features that would differentiate them from other degree programmes:

- In terms of admission, applied degrees should adopt flexible admission requirements to support the articulation of students from different

[9] Degrees include bachelor, master, and doctoral degrees, which are pitched at QF Levels 5, 6 and 7 respectively.

backgrounds, taking into account their relevant learning and work experiences.

- In terms of curriculum, the content of applied degrees should be industry-driven with an emphasis on work-readiness to support the development of the economy as a whole and the target industries or professions in particular. Where possible, the adoption of Specifications of Competency Standards (SCS) and Vocational Qualifications Pathways (VQP) under HKQF in developing the programmes are strongly encouraged.

- In terms of programme delivery, applied degrees provide substantive opportunities in work-based learning and assessment. This can support the development of specific skills that are in line with the demand of the industries or professions.

- In terms of duration, exit and awards, applied degree programmes may comprise modules delivered in flexible mode, and provide multiple exit points with qualifications recognised under HKQF.

- In terms of quality assurance, there is a strong emphasis on industry engagement, with employers, professional bodies or associations participating in the design, delivery and assessment of the programmes.

2.4 Applied degree programmes provide an advanced level of study contributing to a holistic and completed VPET pathway. It also provides an alternative option for students in higher education to pursue credentials that can facilitate their career development in a particular industry or profession.

3. Characteristic Features of Applied Degree Programmes

3.1 Characteristic features of applied degrees are exemplified in the following seven areas:

3.2 To align with the positioning, applied degree programmes should be embedded with the above characteristics. There are numerous issues that need considerations in the development of applied degree programmes and

the following guidelines seek to provide detailed information about this process.

3.3 The guidelines comprise two parts. While the first part describes each of the characteristic features and their importance to applied degree programmes, whereas the second part explains the implementation of these features.

I. Programme Objectives and Learning Outcomes

(i) Special Features

An applied degree programme is generally designed for a specific industry or profession. To provide students with the relevant skills and experience for articulation along the progression routes, it is essential to specify the unique role of an applied degree programme in supporting the future development of the industry or profession, and how the programme can facilitate students' progression along the career pathway.

(ii) Practical Implementation

a. When identifying programmes for development, institutions should conduct analyses on the future development of the target industries or professions in order to anticipate the manpower needs and validate the demand for an applied degree programme.

b. The programme objectives and learning outcomes of an applied degree programme should include the following information:

- Positioning of the programme by specifying -
  - its niche in the VPET pathway;
  - industry specific-skills that the programme is tailoring to;
  - how the programme can meet the developments of the industries or profession; and
  - engagement and support from the industries or professions.
- Manpower needs of the target industries or professions that the programme is addressing; and
- Professional, industry or regulatory requirements that the programme can meet, where appropriate.

II. Admission Requirements

(i) Special Features

To support the development of VPET pathway and to cater the diverse backgrounds, interests and aspirations of different students, the target students of applied degree programmes may include school leavers as well as in-service applicants, who are vocationally or professionally qualified with or yet to acquire an academic qualification for meeting the general entrance requirements for undergraduate programmes.

In this regard, in addition to academic achievements, work experience and other forms of prior learning should also be duly recognised by the applied degree programmes so long as the students admitted into the applied degree programmes have the abilities to undertake and complete the programmes.

Moreover, with a view to minimising duplication of learning effort and promoting credit accumulation and transfer, the programmes should consider stipulating entrance requirements for senior year admissions, tailoring to students with different levels of prior learning. A curriculum design in supporting multiple entry and exit points is highly preferred.

(ii) Practical Implementation

a. An applied degree should have a well-defined and competency-based admission requirement which consider factors in addition to academic achievement, such as work experience, micro-credentials, vocational qualifications and training, etc.

b. Recognition of prior learning (RPL) mechanism should be established to recognise students' relevant skills and knowledge that have already been acquired through previous training, work, or other types of informal and non-formal learning. Institutions have to determine evidence to be submitted for substantiating students' knowledge and skills. Moreover, there should be clearly defined standards and assessment mechanism to verify students' level of attainment (e.g. vetting of relevant documentary proof, interviews, written tests or practical tests) for the purpose of admission.

c. Credit accumulation and transfer (CAT) mechanism should be established to allow students to obtain credit for components in the current programmes which they have already mastered through previous learning. Institutions have to devise policies and tools (e.g. mapping) to measure how the prior learning of an individual, including work experience, academic / professional qualifications and training, meets the requirements of the current qualifications when processing applications for admission and senior year entry. CAT recognition should support programmes and qualifications in the Hong Kong Qualifications Register, including in particular professional qualifications, RPL qualifications, qualifications underpinning Continuing Education Fund, employees retraining and lifelong learning. Customised learning support should be provided in order to ensure students are equipped with the necessary theoretical, technical, and professional knowledge and skills for the programmes.

d. Institutions should apply the RPL and CAT mechanisms to facilitate the articulation of higher diplomas and associate degrees holders. Relevant sub-degree programmes for articulation should be identified.

e. Institutions should provide due recognition to students' qualifications obtained from relevant ApL courses of the senior secondary curriculum for admission to applied degree programmes.

f. Information on admission requirements should be transparent to students, parents and the public so that informed decisions can be duly made. In particular, details of CAT policies, programmes or qualifications eligible for articulation, and RPL mechanism for admission should be communicated to the stakeholders and put on the Hong Kong Qualifications Register.

g. To facilitate articulation to an applied degree programme, institutions are encouraged to consider providing courses and programmes, such as relevant ApL courses and higher diploma programmes, to establish an articulation pathway for the target industries and professions.

III. Curriculum Design

(i) Special Features

To support the admission of diverse learners, the curriculum design of applied degree programmes should facilitate the provision of multiple entry and exit points, allowing students to move between study and work thereby gaining industry-relevant experience for further studies in a flexible manner.

There are occasions where students may take a break from their studies for various reasons. Under the multi-entry and multi-exit structure, students may have the choice to suspend their learning in the programme mid-way and resume learning at a later stage as and when they deem appropriate. A student can obtain appropriate credential(s) upon successful completion of the required credits and can enter the labour market with a qualification or save the credits for continuing the education at a later stage. This makes education more convenient for students and allows them to select the most suitable pace of learning.

The curriculum development of applied degrees should also take note of the development in VPET, such as the developments of SCS and VQP under HKQF and emerging trends such as micro-credentials. Institutions are encouraged to refer to relevant SCS and VQP for developing programmes that can best meet the needs of the industries. This can be coupled with the development of micro-credentials to fully utilise the multi-entry and multi-exit structure and equip aspiring entrants or in-service practitioners with requisite competencies to progress along the career ladders.

(ii) Practical Implementation

a. There should be a built-in curriculum design that can facilitate flexible admission and provide multiple entry and exit points. The curriculum should provide a combination of subjects that would offer multiple entry and exit points. Differentiated from other degree programmes, applied degree programmes have an industry-centric and practice-oriented curriculum. Therefore, the curriculum should be designed with an integration of theories and practical training. Internal articulation of subjects within the curriculum is essential so that students can choose and

learn the subjects of their choice, while getting appropriate certifications upon successful completion of the requirements. For example, upon completion of the first two years of study and fulfilment of the graduation requirements of a higher diploma, students may exit the programme with a higher diploma award and choose to gain industry experience before resuming study at a later stage.

b. Institutions should stipulate study periods that can adequately prepare students for the qualifications. It has to ensure students entering or leaving the programmes at different points can attain the same level of competences underpinned by the exit awards.

c. There should be a timely curriculum review cycle to ensure close alignment with industry advancement and technological development. Meanwhile, the review should consider developments of SCS and VQP under HKQF, as well as emerging trends in VPET, such as micro-credentials, collaborative learning and technology-enabled learning.

d. Institutions are encouraged to consider offering different modes of study (e.g. part-time evening, sandwich and other flexible modes of study) to facilitate students from different backgrounds, including in-service practitioners, in pursuing bachelor's degrees.

IV. Work-based Learning

(i) Special Features

Applied degree programmes focus on equipping students with competences necessary to enter and excel in the job market. Applied degree programmes are of applied nature with an industry-relevant curriculum, making work-based learning is an indispensable component in the programme curriculum.

Work-based learning consists of structured learning opportunities taking place in authentic or simulated work settings which enable students to connect their learning with real-life workplace conditions by undertaking work activities under supervision. The work-based learning activities may take various forms such as internships, practicums, simulation or other learning activities in the authentic or simulated work environment, preferably supplemented with preceding induction and orientation activities.

Engagement of industries or professions is essential in the design, delivery and assessment of work-based learning. Their participation can provide the much-needed exposure to real work, enable authentic training and application of work-ready skills in real-life settings.

(ii) Practical Implementation

a. Institutions should first identify skills that the target industries or professions require and how these can be developed through the use of different instructional methods. The learning outcomes of work-based learning component (either on site or through simulated methods) have to be mapped to authentic workplace delivery contexts.

b. Institutions should integrate the work-based components with other parts of learning. Work-based learning experience in early parts of study is often used as a basis for developing the subsequent learning activities. For example, with the competences developed in internships, students can carry out industry-based projects in the real workplace for solving authentic problems of a company or an industry / profession.

c. Institutions should develop a collaboration policy with industries or professions so that all parties can work together in the design, delivery and assessment of the programmes. It requires the two parties to agree on a shared agenda, i.e. how the arrangement of work-based learning can reflect and be aligned with the industry demand. It is essential that employers see the benefits so that they will work together to identify types of opportunities available for students and create assignments / projects which fit the respective objectives.

d. Mentoring system should be established to support students' learning in the workplace, which usually includes the workplace supervisors, academic staff responsible for classroom teaching, and coordinators for arranging the work-based learning. Institutions should offer training to workplace supervisors and teaching staff on providing students with industry-specific support, general career and education guidance, as well as skills in conducting work-based learning and assessment.

e. Institutions are encouraged to consider providing extended opportunities of work-based learning experience, such as cross-disciplinary learning projects and non-local learning opportunities, to broaden students' exposure.

f. Institutions are encouraged to consider integrating and embedding the programme delivery in collaboration with industry with a view to delivering a substantive part of the programme in industry context.

g. Institutions are encouraged to put in place mechanisms and measures to recruit qualified practitioners as teaching staff and enable their teaching staff to update their work-based knowledge and skills through such measures as secondment and mentorship.

i. Institutions are encouraged to consider facilitating teachers and students to carry out applied research and development on products and services with a view to supporting further integration with industries.

Quality Assurance

(i) Special Features

Applied degrees have distinctive features in the different areas, including but not limited to flexible admission design, work-based learning and assessment, and recognition of industries and/or professions. Consequently, it is essential to review whether the existing quality assurance system of an institution can appropriately support, enhance, monitor and evaluate the implementation of applied degree programmes.

Moreover, industries or professions are playing an increasingly proactive role in collaborating with education institutions. Their participation should not be limited to the internship or industrial attachment components of an applied degree programme. Instead, the quality assurance mechanism of applied degrees should allow and reflect the engagement of industries or professions in the design, delivery and assessment of the programmes at all levels. Through bringing in the latest development and standards of the professions or industries, their participation can further enhance the synergy between learning and employment.

(ii) Practical Implementation

a. The quality assurance mechanism of an applied degree programme should reflect engagement of industries or professions in the following areas:

- industries or professions having a stake in developing talent have a representation in the programme committees / programme advisory committees, serving as members or advisors to provide inputs on curriculum design. This is to ensure the programmes are up-to-date and preparing students with skills relevant to the prevailing and future needs of the industries or professions.

- industry and professional members are engaged in programme delivery and assessment via-

  – acting as part-time or guest lecturers in programme delivery to disseminate industry practices, enabling students to perform effectively in an area;

- acting as external examiners, where appropriate, to ensure achievement of students' learning outcomes through industry practices;

- acting as assessors, where appropriate, for work-based learning (e.g. practicums, internships or projects) and other practical subjects, embedding industry standards to evaluate students' performance; and

- providing comments on the alignment and mapping between delivery contexts in the workplace with the learning outcomes of the work-based learning components (e.g. practicum or internships).

b. There should be mechanisms in collecting relevant data to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of applied degree programmes in achieving the programme objectives and learning outcomes as well as the implementation of the characteristic features (e.g. performance of students admitted via different background, their articulation to the target industries / professions, feedback of industry partners). In particular, institutions should take into account experience gained from the first year of programme operation for possible enhancements.

V. Recognition and Support from Industries, Professions and Regulatory Authorities

(i) Special Features

To provide students with an access to the target industries or professions, institutions have to maintain close collaborations with the stakeholders and continuously look for opportunities to help students obtain the needed recognition of and support from the target industry / profession and relevant regulatory authorities.

(ii) Practical Implementation

a. Institutions should consider the following measures, where appropriate, to obtain support from relevant employer sectors and recognition by licensing, regulatory, and professional bodies:

- Explicitly stating the target industries, professions or professional qualifications in the development of the applied degree programmes;

- Clearly delineating the target jobs for its graduates and make this information available to students, parents and the public;

- Building a strong network with relevant stakeholders in supporting and maintaining the edge of the programmes as highly relevant to the target industries or professions. In particular, it is important to ensure that teaching staff has a close connection with the industries so that they can be kept updated on the industry development to facilitate programme development and delivery;

- Develop and maintain close collaborations with industries and professions with a view to articulating graduates to employment.

- Obtaining evidence of support from industries, professions or professional bodies, such as letter of support from employers, professional recognition from professional bodies or regulatory authorities, etc. This information will be made available to students, parents and the public; and

- Conducting systematic analyses on graduate destinations, demonstrating that the applied degrees are highly relevant to and well-received by the target industries or professions. The information will be made available to students, parents and the public to assist them to make an informed decision.

VI. Technology Application

(i) Special Features

Technology plays an essential role in the workplace as it is transforming the way that work is being accomplished. This has implications for the design of learning environments, including the content, delivery method, and assessment where work requirements are part of the content of applied degree programmes.

As technology becomes more important in nowadays workplace across different disciplines, there are also growing expectations that technology as a skill is part of the learning experience, and that students are equipped with understanding and experience of its use in the target industries or professions.

Furthermore, with flexible admission requirements, students of applied degrees may come from diverse backgrounds with different learning needs. Institutions should adopt appropriate use of technological learning tools to facilitate students' learning. Advanced pedagogy and technological tools can also facilitate equipping students with work-ready skills.

(ii) Practical Implementation

a. When designing the use of technology in learning / teaching, the following factors should be considered:

- Impacts of workplace technologies and how these can be translated and incorporated in the programme contents in line with the learning, teaching and assessment; and

- Technological competency of teaching staff so that they are competent to apply new technology in teaching and learning delivery.

Appendix 2

Roles and Responsibilities of Panel Members

1. Under the 'peer review' principle, decisions on review findings are made by HKCAAVQ after consideration of recommendations made by peers involved in the exercise as members of a panel.

2. The role of the panel is to review and evaluate evidence and form a judgment in respect of the criteria of the IR. The panel works according to the principles set out within the relevant sections of HKCAAVQ *Manual for Institutional Review for University of Applied Sciences* for the fulfillment of the Terms of Reference for the review exercise.

3. In order to perform their duties effectively and efficiently, panel members attend training and/or briefing session(s) and two panel meetings (i.e. initial meeting and pre-visit meeting), make themselves familiar with HKCAAVQ review requirements and processes, read thoroughly the Institutional Submission and materials supplied by the institutions, make initial comments on the Institutional Submission and other materials, participate in the site visit where necessary, share views and put forward recommendations to HKCAAVQ as a panel. Panel members are also expected to share their views on the draft IR Report.

4. The respective roles of the Panel Chair, the Panel Members and the Panel Secretary are outlined below:

Panel Chairperson

- To lead the panel in the review exercise.
- To advise on the site visit programme and adjust the programme, where applicable.
- To chair the initial meeting of the panel, pre-visit meeting and any meetings of the panel.
- To provide overall guidance in order to satisfactorily complete the exercise.
- To lead panel deliberations of the review findings for recommendation to HKCAAVQ. When unavoidable, to put the matter to the vote; in the case of equality of votes, the Chairperson shall have a second vote.
- To oversee the accuracy and appropriateness of the IR Report, representing the view of the panel, before submitting it to HKCAAVQ for consideration and making decisions on review findings.

- To perform all other roles as panel member.

Panel Members

- To make preparation for the review exercise in good time.
- To provide observations and findings throughout the review exercise, participation in the full programme of the site visit, where applicable, sharing of views during the panel meetings, and provide comments on the IR Report.
- To deliberate on the review outcome and make recommendation to HKCAAVQ.

Panel Secretary (HKCAAVQ Case Officer)

- To be a member of the panel.
- To perform the following roles:

  (i) To assist the panel to understand HKCAAVQ's review policies, standards, criteria and practices, local educational system and development, special features of the review exercise at hand, and any precedents that may be relevant to the exercise.

  (ii) To provide professional support in the conduct of the review exercise, and preparation of IR Reports.

5. The panel is subject to the code of conduct and compliance with confidentiality applicable to all HKCAAVQ Panel Members. Before finalisation of the panel membership, there is a checking of conflict of interest with the institution as declared in writing by potential panel members. For details, please refer to the HKCAAVQ Code of Conduct for Panels in Appendix 3.

Appendix 3

HKCAAVQ Code of Conduct for Panels

Preamble

1. This document sets out general guiding principles for the Panel Chairs and members of HKCAAVQ panels conducting accreditation, audit, review or other assessment activities (hereafter referred to generally as accreditation activity) regarding possible conflict of interests, the duty of confidentiality and prevention of bribery.

Conflict of Interests

General Principles

2. HKCAAVQ Panel Chairs and members (hereafter referred to generally as panel members) may experience conflict of interests between their role(s) with HKCAAVQ and their other professional activities.

3. Panel members should advise HKCAAVQ of any possible conflict of interests which may arise either before, during or following the accreditation activity, and make full disclosure of their interests to HKCAAVQ at the earliest available opportunity.

4. If the conflict of interest issue is only identified in the course of their engagement in the accreditation activity, the panel member should immediately place such matter before the respective panel and seek instructions. Depending on the circumstance, he / she might be required by the panel to withdraw from the exercise or be excused from the discussion or decision-making of a particular subject matter. In some cases, where the conflict is slight or only possibly perceived, the panel member may be allowed to continue in the panel's work but both the declaration and the reason for the special treatment must be on record.

5. It is however not intended that a panel member should make a declaration of interest simply because he or she has particular knowledge or experience on a subject matter.

Potential Conflict of Interest Situations

6. For illustration, the following are examples of potential conflict of interests:

(a) The panel member was / is serving, with or without pay, as an adviser, examiner, consultant to the client organisation concerned; or if he / she has recently been an applicant for a position (irrespective of whether the outcome is known to the applicant), or is a current applicant or intending applicant for a position in the client organisation.

(b) The panel member has any other close association / partnership with the client organisation concerned. Examples of such could include any joint commercial or professional activity carried out by the panel member in a personal capacity in conjunction with staff member(s) in the client organisation concerned and who are closely associated with the accreditation activity in question, or any potential involvement of a similar nature.

(c) The panel member who, as a barrister, solicitor, accountant or other professional adviser, has personally or otherwise advised or represented or had frequent dealings with the client organization concerned, or any person or body closely connected with the client organisation.

(d) Pecuniary interests in a matter under consideration by HKCAAVQ, held either by the panel member or by any close relative of his / hers.

(e) Kinship or some friendship which might be so close as to warrant declaration in order to avoid situation where an objective observer might believe that an advice from the panel member could have been influenced by the closeness of the association.

(f) Personal conflicts could also include animosity or any interest likely to lead an objective observer to believe that the panel member's advice might have been motivated by personal interest rather than a duty to give impartial advice.

7. Where the panel member is working in a client organisation that is in competition with one which is subject to the accreditation activity by HKCAAVQ, such situation will normally not be considered as to constitute a potential for conflict of interest, as long as the connection is known to HKCAAVQ, the panel and the client organisation concerned.

8. In order to avoid a conflict-of-interests situation arising, panel members are advised to abstain from accepting or negotiating consultancies or performing other services for the client organisation which is subject to the accreditation activity by HKCAAVQ, and to abstain from accepting hospitality from the organisation concerned, before, during and immediately after the

accreditation activity until the relevant report has been issued.

Confidentiality of Documents

General Principles

9. All documents generated through the HKCAAVQ accreditation activities are confidential information and should be used solely for the purpose of the exercise concerned.

10. Panel Chairs or members shall treat as proprietary and confidential any information or material made available to them either through HKCAAVQ or the client organisation in question for the purpose of conducting the exercise concerned.

11. Panel members have a right to ask for (and receive) through HKCAAVQ any information and explanation they need in order to discharge their roles in the context of the accreditation activity. However, these privileges and rights must not be abused and must be exercised with care and integrity so that requests for personal or commercial information of a sensitive nature would be kept to the essential minimum.

12. The materials collected from the client organisation subject to the accreditation activity or the report produced by HKCAAVQ for the purpose of the exercise, and the copyright therein shall be and shall remain the exclusive property of HKCAAVQ or the client organisation concerned, as the case may be.

13. Panel members may make notes during the course of exercise in order to help them understand the issues being discussed and to facilitate the performance of their roles in the exercise as required by HKCAAVQ. These notes should not be divulged to any other party unrelated to the accreditation activity.

14. Panel members shall not communicate, or make known, any information or documents collected in the exercise or views expressed by another member or any person met in the course of the accreditation activity at any time without prior approval by HKCAAVQ.

15. Upon the completion of the exercise with the issuance of the HKCAAVQ accreditation report, panel members are expected to destroy all information gathered for the exercise, except for any information which is in the public domain.

Prevention of Bribery

16. All HKCAAVQ Specialists / Accreditation Panel Members are invited to take note of the provisions of the Prevention of Bribery Ordinance (Cap 201), which is applicable to HKCAAVQ. You are kindly reminded not to offer any advantage to HKCAAVQ staff in connection with your appointment as a specialist / panel member and serving as a panel member. You must not solicit or accept any advantage and/or entertainment from an operator in relation to an accreditation exercise that you are engaged in. Panel members should not participate in entertainment (e.g. lunch and dinner) offered by the operator during the course of the accreditation exercise or before the issuance of the relevant accreditation report.

Appendix 4

Indicative Timeline of IR-UAS Process

Indicative Timeframe	Tasks
Before Submission for IR-UAS	
Institution conducts a self-review	
Institution makes an application to EDB	
EDB endorses the application	
HKCAAVQ liaises with the institution to determine the schedule of the IR-UAS exercise	
HKCAAVQ signed the Service Agreement with the institution	
Institution attends a briefing conducted by HKCAAVQ	
Institution checks conflict of interest of potential panel members	
After Submission	
Week 1	Institution submits IR-UAS Submission to HKCAAVQ
Week 2	Initial meeting of the Panel
Week 2 - 5	Panel reviews the Submission and raises initial comments and/or request for clarification and/or supplementary information
Weeks 6	Panel Secretary compiles Panel's initial comments and sends to the institution for response
Week 7 - 8	Institution responds to Panel's initial comments and/or requests
Week 9	Panel reviews the response
Week 10	Panel meets to deliberate on the submissions, including the response. Panel may request for further clarification, or request for a site-visit / meeting (either physical or virtual), or conclude on the submissions and make recommendation to HKCAAVQ.
Week 11 - 12	Institution responds to Panel's further comments / requests, if any.
Week 13	Panel reviews Institution's further response and concludes on the submissions and make recommendation to HKCAAVQ.

Week 14 – 18	Institution arranges / attends site-visit / meeting with Panel, if necessary.		
With NO site-visit or meeting with Panel		**With site-visit or meeting with Panel**	
Week 18	Panel comments on draft IR-UAS Report	**Week 24**	Panel comments on draft IR-UAS Report
Week 19	Internal clearance of HKCAAVQ on draft IR-UAS Report	**Week 26**	Internal clearance of HKCAAVQ on draft IR-UAS Report
Week 20	Institution checks factual accuracy of draft IR-UAS Report	**Week 27**	Institution checks factual accuracy of draft IR-UAS Report
Week 20	Institution receives IR Report from HKCAAVQ	**Week 28**	Institution receives IR Report from HKCAAVQ

Address: 10 Siu Sai Wan Road, Chai Wan, Hong Kong

Tel: 3658 0000
Email: info@hkcaavq.edu.hk
Website: www.hkcaavq.edu.hk