

**Notes of the Third Meeting of the Second Term of Liaison Panel for Academic Accreditation at 3:00 pm on 13 June 2022 in the Theatre of the office of the Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications, 10 Siu Sai Wan Road, Chai Wan, Hong Kong**

Present: Dr Joe HONG (Chair)  
Professor Jimmy LEE  
Professor Yu-Hon LUI  
Dr Louis MA  
Dr Kim MAK  
Mr Jonathan NG  
Dr Homer TSO  
Professor Eric YU  
Mr Kenny LOCK (Secretary)

Absent with apologies: Professor YV HUI  
Professor Allan HK YUEN

In Attendance: Dr CHIU Sau Mee  
Ms Anna CHEUNG  
Ms Helen YAU

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Chair welcomed Members of the Liaison Panel for Academic Accreditation (LPAA). He appreciated the participation of Members and looked forward to listening to their views to facilitate further improvement of HKCAAVQ's services that better fit the needs of the academic sector.

## **2. BRIEFING ON THE LATEST DEVELOPMENT OF HKCAAVQ'S ACCREDITATION SERVICES**

### **2.1 Growing Maturity in Quality Assurance and Quality Enhancement**

Members noted that the number of operators with Programme Area Accreditation (PAA) status and the overall number of PAA status approved by HKCAAVQ both demonstrated a rise between 2019 and 2021. This, along with the planned PAA exercises, is reflective of the growing maturity of operators. Meanwhile, other institutions are at varying maturity levels in programme planning and implementation, as demonstrated in areas such as the following:

- (a) Consistency in admission through admission interviews as an entry requirement
- (b) Programme design, structure and content
- (c) Clarity and consistency of rubrics and marking of assessment
- (d) Coverage of electives in fulfilling Programme Objectives
- (e) Evidence to demonstrate sufficient provision of resources for future expansion
- (f) Mechanisms for communication with external stakeholders
- (g) Collaboration / Input from local and home institutions

In relation to (g) above, HKCAAVQ advised Members that policy initiatives will be in place to facilitate the articulation of sub-degree programme learners and graduates from non-degree-awarding operators to degree programmes at other institutions.

## 2.2 **Outcome of External Review of HKCAAVQ by ENQA**

Members noted that HKCAAVQ engaged the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) in 2019 to conduct an external review on the basis of the 14 standards set out in the *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area* (ESG).

ENQA concluded that HKCAAVQ is in substantial compliance with the ESG, enabling HKCAAVQ to become the first quality assurance agency in the Asia-Pacific region and outside the European Higher Education Area and Europe to have obtained “substantial compliance” with the ESG. HKCAAVQ briefed Members on the commendations of the ENQA review panel, as well as cultural and other factors that contributed to areas in which HKCAAVQ is not considered to be in full alignment with the ESG. Members noted that subsequent to the ENQA external review, institutions from two jurisdictions in the Asia-Pacific region have expressed interest in seeking HKCAAVQ’s quality assurance services.

## 2.3 **Joint Accreditation with Professional Bodies**

HKCAAVQ introduced that some learning programmes undertake not only HKCAAVQ accreditation, but also seek mandatory or voluntary professional recognition by relevant professional bodies and/or approval from relevant approval authorities. Considering the issues that could arise on the side of operators in seeking concurrent or sequential accreditation / recognition / approval from multiple bodies, HKCAAVQ is exploring the feasibility of joint accreditation / recognition exercises.

Members welcomed the initiative, which is anticipated to be beneficial to operators.

#### 2.4 **Accreditation Services in Support of the Greater Bay Area (GBA) Initiatives**

HKCAAVQ introduced its initiatives in supporting the development of the Greater Bay Area (GBA), which include:

- (a) provision of quality assurance services to higher education institutions in Macao;
- (b) provision of consultancy service in Guangdong Province for the establishment of the quality assurance mechanism and the Qualifications Register under the Guangdong Lifelong Education Qualifications Framework; and
- (c) provision of accreditation services for collaborative programmes that lead to awards which are jointly conferred and delivered in Hong Kong by two institutions as the award-granting bodies and/or operators.

Members exchanged views on the possible opportunities and challenges arising from the development of higher education quality assurance in Mainland China, as well as issues on the mutual recognition of qualifications within the GBA.

### 3. **DISCUSSION ON THE LATEST DEVELOPMENTS IN THE SELF-FINANCING HIGHER EDUCATION SECTOR IN HONG KONG**

- 3.1. The Education Bureau is undertaking a review of the Post Secondary Colleges Ordinance (Cap. 320). Members exchanged views on issues pertinent to the revamp of Cap. 320, including the positioning of the Associate Degree and Higher Diploma qualifications, and articulation arrangements for holders of sub-degree qualifications from non-degree-awarding institutions.
- 3.2. Members discussed how the dropping student population in the entrance cohorts has impacted admission to UGC-funded and self-financing institutions, and how institutions have responded to such a change. Members noted that HKCAAVQ is seeking to facilitate operators in their adaptation to related changes and the evolving socio-educational contexts.

#### **4. APPLICATION OF GUIDELINES AND BEYOND**

4.1. It has come to HKCAAVQ's attention that substantial changes to HKCAAVQ-accredited programmes have not been timely reported to HKCAAVQ on some occasions. Members noted the following:

- (a) Operators should inform HKCAAVQ of any changes to their accredited programmes. Where necessary, HKCAAVQ will advise the operator whether the changes are classified as minor changes, substantial changes or significant departures; and
- (b) HKCAAVQ is actively liaising with operators on the interpretation of substantial changes and any potential need to revise the relevant guidance documents.

#### **5. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

5.1. Members noted that HKCAAVQ is undertaking an initiative to develop robotic process automation to support critical quality assurance processes in accreditation. Subject to the progress of the initiative, HKCAAVQ will provide an update to Members on preliminary results of the initiative at the next LPAA meeting.

5.2. There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:17 p.m.

JoH/AnC/KnL/knl