



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

Procedure for Review of Applied Degree Programmes

Version 1.0 | November 2024

Procedure for Review of Applied Degree Programmes

1. Preamble

This procedure is designed to provide guidance and detailed steps for institutions to prepare for the review of applied degree programmes (hereafter referred to as Review).

The Review is applicable to the following scenarios:

- When a new applied degree programme is developed or when an existing accredited programme is proposed to convert to an applied degree programme, the programme needs to go through Review in parallel with learning programme accreditation (LPA)/re-accreditation (Re-LPA) or relevant substantial change application.
- When an applied degree programme undergoes re-accreditation (re-LPA), HKCAAVQ will adopt a risk-based approach to determine whether Review will be conducted in parallel with the re-LPA.
- An Operator with Programme Area Accreditation (PAA) status that has not operated any applied degree programmes before can propose to convert the existing programme(s) covered by its PAA status to applied degree programme(s) through Review conducted in parallel with a PAA / Periodic Institutional Review (PIR) exercise, or launch a new programme through its PAA status as an applied degree programme by going through standalone Review.
- When conducting Periodic Institutional Review (PIR) for an Operator, HKCAAVQ will determine, based on a risk-based approach, whether any applied degree programmes covered by the Operator's PAA status will undergo Review in parallel with the PIR.

2. Details of the procedure

2.1 The Review procedure comprises the following five major steps:

- Signing of service agreement between HKCAAVQ and the Operator
- Formation of Review Panel by HKCAAVQ
- Submission of programme information by the Operator
- Review of programme information, collection of further information, and making a recommendation on the Review outcome by the Review Panel
- Report on determination of Review outcome by HKCAAVQ

2.2 Signing of service agreement between HKCAAVQ and the Operator

- HKCAAVQ and the Operator sign a service agreement to conduct Review. For Review with an accreditation exercise or a substantial change assessment (hereafter referred to as the parallel exercise), a separate service agreement will be signed.

2.3 Formation of Review Panel by HKCAAVQ

- A Review Panel is formed by engaging experts in the relevant sector/discipline/industry. The Review Panel consists of a Panel Chair, at least one member being a practitioner with substantial experience in the relevant field, and an HKCAAVQ staff serving as the Panel Secretary and a member of the Review Panel. HKCAAVQ will decide the size of the Review Panel taking into consideration the characteristics of the proposed applied degree.
- For Review conducted with a parallel exercise, Review Panel members can be drawn from the Panel/subject specialists of the parallel exercise to play a dual role.

2.4 Submission of programme information by the Operator

- Timeline of submission

Submission of programme information follows the corresponding timeline of the parallel exercise, if applicable, or should be three months in advance of the issuance date of the Review Report.

- Presentation of programme information

The Operator should refer to the Guidelines on Developing on Development Applied Degree Programmes (Guidelines) when developing an applied degree programme. The Operator can decide whether to present programme information relevant to the Guidelines in a separate submission document or include the information in the submission document for the parallel exercise, if applicable. In the latter case, the Operator should ensure the relevant information is presented in a way that can facilitate review by the Review Panel members, who may or may not be a Panel member of the parallel exercise.

2.5 Review of programme information, collection of further information, and making recommendation by the Review Panel

- After programme information is reviewed by the Review Panel, requests for further information or clarification from individual Review Panel members are sent to the Panel secretary for consolidation into the Review Panel's Summary of initial comments for the Operator to respond. After receiving and reviewing the response, supplementary questions may be sent to the Operator for response.
- For Review with a parallel exercise that has a site visit, the general arrangements follow those for the accreditation exercise. In general, all meeting sessions with the Operator during the site visit and the questions raised by members of either the Review Panel or Accreditation Panel of the parallel exercise during these sessions can serve for either or both the Review and parallel exercise. Depending on the circumstances, HKCAAVQ may arrange individual meeting sessions exclusively for the Review. For Panel private meetings, especially the meeting session for deliberation on the respective Panel's recommendations on the outcomes of the Review and parallel exercise, members not engaged in the Review should either be excused from the part of the meeting session or be a silent observer when deliberating the Review Panel's recommendation to ensure that this recommendation is only contributed by members of the Review Panel.

- For standalone Review or Review with a parallel exercise that does not have a site visit, normally, a paper-based review is preferred unless a site visit is warranted, which should normally be conducted through an online platform. Meetings of the Review Panel through an online platform at any stage may also be arranged if needed.

2.6 Report on determination of Review Outcome by HKCAAVQ

- HKCAAVQ makes a Review determination in a Review Report after considering the Review Panel's recommendation and the available evidence. The possible determinations by HKCAAVQ are approval, approval with Condition(s) and/or Restriction(s), and non-approval. The Review Report may also include recommendations and advice. The Review Report is subject to review under Cap. 1150, Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications Ordinance.
- For standalone Review, the Review Report will normally be issued within three months after submission of programme information.
- For Review with a parallel exercise, the timeline for issuing the Review Report generally follows that of the accreditation report/outcome letter for the parallel exercise.
- The accreditation report/outcome letter of the parallel exercise may stipulate a condition that the programme(s) concerned must gain approval as applied degree programme(s). This is normally applicable if the Panel/specialists engaged for the parallel exercise consider that the programme aims, objectives or learning outcomes indicate that the programme is designed to be recognised as applied degree programme as proposed by the Operator.

2.7 Follow-up on the Review Outcome

- If the Review Report includes Conditions, either as Pre-conditions or Requirements, the approval determination by HKCAAVQ has effect subject to fulfilment of those Conditions. Operator must provide evidence for fulfilment of conditions by the specified dates.
- Pre-conditions must be fulfilled by the specified dates before the approval determination has effect.
- Requirements must be fulfilled by the specified dates after the approval. HKCAAVQ may vary or withdraw a Review Report if requirements are not fulfilled.
- A decision to impose Restrictions can also form part of the Review determination, to be complied with by an Operator by specified dates prior to and/or after the approval, and/or all along after the approval. The Operator's ability to comply with a Restriction is normally dependent on actions taken by Third Parties, such as government departments or professional bodies.

- Conditions and/or restrictions stipulated in the Review Report may lead to changes at the institutional and/or programme level(s) that have a bearing on the accreditation status of the programme concerned. Such changes may require separate approval from HKCAAVQ through a substantial change assessment.

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