Agensi Kelayakan Malaysia
Malaysian Qualifications Agency

GUIDELINES FOR EVALUATION OF CRITERIA:
INSTITUTIONAL QUALITY AUDIT FRAMEWORK (IQAF)

2026
EDITION

AGENSI KELAYAKAN MALAYSIA
PENDIDIKAN TINGGI BERKUALITI GLOBAL
Global Quality Higher Education

GUIDELINES FOR EVALUATION OF CRITERIA: INSTITUTIONAL QUALITY AUDIT FRAMEWORK (IQAF)

First Edition: 2026

Published by:

Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA)
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Citation Format: Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA). (2026). *Guidelines for Evaluation of Criteria: Institutional Quality Audit Framework (IQAF)*.

All the Agency's publications are available on our website: www.mqa.gov.my

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ABBREVIATIONS

1.	AL	Attainment level
2.	AQAF	ASEAN Quality Assurance Framework
3.	ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
4.	COPIA	Code of Practice for Institutional Audit
5.	HEP	Higher education provider
6.	ICT	Information and communication technology
7.	IQAF	Institutional Quality Audit Framework
8.	MOHE	Ministry of Higher Education
9.	MQA	Malaysian Qualifications Agency
10.	MQF	Malaysian Qualifications Framework
11.	ODL	Open and distance learning
12.	SRP	Self-review portfolio

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SECTION 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

Malaysia advocates the development of competent, knowledgeable and competitive human capital as part of its plan to become a nation of competitive talent that supports the national and social development agenda while ensuring sustainable economic growth. In line with the national agenda to make Malaysia a preferred regional centre for higher education, the quality of the qualifications conferred by Malaysian higher education providers (HEPs) needs to be built upon and sustained by a robust and credible quality assurance system, with an emphasis on outcome-based education that will ensure that graduates are of high quality and competitive in facing globalisation.

The Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA), as the country's sole quality assurance agency overseeing both public and private HEPs, develops and implements the Malaysian Qualifications Framework (MQF) that serves as the basis for quality assurance in higher education and as a national reference point for all qualifications conferred in the country. The MQF integrates all higher education qualifications and provides educational pathways that systematically link these qualifications. In assuring the quality of higher education in Malaysia, MQA uses two approaches: the first is to accredit programmes and qualifications, and the second is to audit institutions or their components.

1.2 Institutional Quality Audits

Institutional quality audits take many forms. It could be comprehensive or thematic, or by department or faculty, or across departments or faculties. It could take the form of a quality audit for the purpose of institutional quality assurance, a periodic academic performance audit on institutions of higher learning, or an exercise to verify data, for public policy input, or for the rating and ranking of institutions and programmes. The highest form of the institutional quality audit is the self-accreditation audit, which can lead to a conferment of a self-accreditation status for the institution being audited, after which the institution can accredit its own programmes. Sometimes called a “system audit”, the institutional quality audit for self-accreditation purposes focuses on the capacity and capability of the internal quality assurance system of an HEP to evaluate academic programmes that it offers.

An institutional quality audit on an HEP is normally carried out based on a reference institutional audit document. Previously, the referenced document was the Code of Practice for Institutional Audit (COPIA), of which the second edition was published by MQA in 2009. The document contains standards and criteria for the institutional quality audit as well as procedures and guidelines for the audit. This edition of COPIA was reviewed and renamed as the Institutional Quality Audit Framework (IQAF) in 2025, which aims to strengthen the alignment with the MQF and address the ASEAN Quality Assurance Framework (AQAF).

The IQAF document contains **80 standards** with **30 criteria**. These standards serve as benchmarks for institutions applying for or renewing self-accreditation status, or those being audited for other purposes related to quality assurance and enhancement, depending on the scope of the audit conducted. They are grouped into five areas of evaluation, as follows:

a. Institutional Governance and Sustainability;
b. Academic Development and Management;
c. Student Experience and Support;
d. Talent and Resources; and
e. Quality Assurance and Enhancement.

During the institutional quality audit process, the panel of auditors evaluates the degree to which the HEP fulfils all the stipulated standards, depending on the type of audit process undergone or applied by the HEP, whether it is for an award of self-accreditation status or its renewal, or for other purposes of audit.

In principle, the fulfilment of all the stipulated standards is necessary for an HEP to be recommended by the panel of auditors for a self-accreditation award or renewal of the status. Hence, based on this principle, this document provides the rubrics for all standards, either to be evaluated as a stand-alone standard or in combination with other related standards within the same criterion. By correctly interpreting the rubrics, the panel of auditors will be able to consistently apply and assign the appropriate attainment level to each area of evaluation. This will lead to an increase in the validity and reliability of the accreditation evaluation.

1.3 General Evaluation Framework

Generally, the evaluation of a criterion is developed based on a 5-point scale of attainment levels (ALs). The generic descriptors of the attainment level are as follows:

AL 1 Inadequate, non-fulfilment of any of the standards in the criterion, leading to a major deficiency and requiring major improvement to adequately address the criterion as a whole.

AL 2 Less adequate, partial fulfilment of at least one of the standards in the criterion, leading to a minor deficiency and requiring minor improvement to adequately address the criterion as a whole.

AL 3 Adequately addressing the criterion, fulfilment of the criterion as a whole as indicated directly by its statement(s).

AL 4 Addressing the criterion efficiently and/or effectively, the HEP and its internal quality assurance system manage the respective processes in maintaining their efficiency and effectiveness.

AL 5 Exceeding the criterion, to the extent that the respective processes and/or systems demonstrate good/best or exemplary practice which could be benchmarked by other parties.

The **expected score** for fulfilling a criterion is set at **AL 3**.

Based on these generic descriptors, specific descriptors have been developed for all the criteria to form the assessment rubrics as outlined in Section 2. These rubrics serve as guidelines for the panel of auditors in conducting the evaluation.

SECTION 2

GUIDE TO EVALUATION OF CRITERIA FOR INSTITUTIONAL QUALITY AUDIT

The following criteria and standards are applicable during the evaluation of an institutional quality audit. The individual standards in each area of the IQAF have been clustered into thematic criteria to reflect the evaluation process in the area. Stakeholders, particularly higher education providers (HEPs), will be able to use the rubrics as a self-assessment instrument and be prepared for the submission of the institutional audit self-review documents for evaluation, referred to as the Self-Review Portfolio (SRP); while the panel of auditors is able to evaluate the HEP based on the criteria identified in each area of the IQAF. The supporting documents listed are examples of evidence and documentation that could be provided together with the SRP or be presented by the HEP during the evaluation visit. Though not exhaustive, the HEP and the panel of auditors may refer to the examples of supporting documents. These examples are derived as a reference to address the criteria and standards listed in Section 2 of the IQAF 2025 document.

AREA 1: INSTITUTIONAL GOVERNANCE AND SUSTAINABILITY

1.1 Vision, Mission and Educational Goals

Standard 1.1.1
The HEP **must** formulate educational goals consistent with its vision and mission, in line with national and global developments.

Standard 1.1.2
The vision, mission and educational goals **must** be approved by the governing board or other appropriate body for implementation.

Standard 1.1.3
The HEP **must** disseminate the vision, mission and educational goals accordingly to relevant stakeholders.

Attainment Level Rubrics (Criterion 1.1)

Attainment Level	Description
1	The HEP fulfils **NONE** of the following: ● Formulates educational goals consistent with its vision and mission, in line with national and global developments. ● Has the vision, mission and educational goals approved by the governing board or other appropriate body for implementation. ● Disseminates the vision, mission and educational goals accordingly to relevant stakeholders.
2	The HEP fulfils **AT LEAST ONE** of the following: ● Formulates educational goals consistent with its vision and mission, in line with national and global developments. ● Has the vision, mission and educational goals approved by the governing board or other appropriate body for implementation. ● Disseminates the vision, mission and educational goals accordingly to relevant stakeholders.
3	The HEP formulates educational goals consistent with its vision and mission, in line with national and global developments. The vision, mission and educational goals are approved by the governing board or other appropriate body for implementation, and they are disseminated accordingly to relevant stakeholders.
4	The HEP systematically reviews the achievement of its educational goals at stipulated time to address emerging challenges, including evolving stakeholder expectations, national priorities and global educational trends. The findings from these reviews are critically evaluated and systematically integrated into the HEP's strategic agenda. This process ensures that institutional planning and continual improvements are evidence-based, aligned with the HEP's vision and mission and responsive to future developments.

Attainment Level	Description
5	The HEP establishes and implements a robust, evidence-based system for the periodic review of the achievement of educational goals, ensuring alignment with its vision, mission and strategic objectives. The review process is guided by well-defined governance structures and accountability mechanisms, supporting continual quality enhancement across all institutional levels. It ensures that the institution remains responsive to internal developments and external changes, including stakeholder expectations, national priorities and global trends in higher education.

Examples of Supporting Documents:

- Approved vision and mission statements.
- Evidence of stakeholder consultation.
- Website, documents and reports reflecting institutional alignment.
- Review committee minutes and cycle documentation.

1.2 Strategic Plans

Standard 1.2.1
The HEP **must** develop strategic plans together with its institutional goals in line with its vision and mission, and in consultation with relevant stakeholders.

Standard 1.2.2
The strategic plans **must** be disseminated, deployed, implemented and monitored accordingly.

Attainment Level Rubrics (Criterion 1.2)

Attainment Level	Description
1	The HEP fulfils **NONE** of the following: ● Develops strategic plans together with its institutional goals in line with its vision and mission, and in consultation with relevant stakeholders. ● Has the strategic plans disseminated, deployed, implemented and monitored accordingly.
2	The HEP fulfils **PARTIALLY** or **AT LEAST ONE** of the following: ● Develops strategic plans together with its institutional goals in line with its vision and mission, and in consultation with relevant stakeholders. ● Has the strategic plans disseminated, deployed, implemented and monitored accordingly.

Attainment Level	Description
3	The HEP develops strategic plans together with its institutional goals in line with its vision and mission, and in consultation with relevant stakeholders, of which the strategic plans are disseminated, deployed, implemented and monitored accordingly.
4	The HEP's strategic planning is comprehensive and institution-wide, fully integrated with resource allocation, risk assessment and continual quality improvement processes. The implementation of strategic plans is monitored through structured governance mechanisms, with clear evidence of effective management to maintain their relevance and effectiveness. Strategic plans are reviewed systematically and periodically, guided by clearly defined performance indicators, stakeholder feedback and consideration of relevant national priorities and global developments.
5	The HEP demonstrates strategic foresight by aligning its institutional plans with long-term national aspirations and global sustainability agendas, resulting in measurable impact. Its planning framework is participatory, data driven and adaptable, incorporating external benchmarking and recognition. The effective implementation of these strategies has resulted in transformative innovations and excellence across key areas such as teaching, research, governance and community engagement.

Examples of Supporting Documents:

- Approved strategic plan.
- Board/Senate approval minutes for the strategic plan.
- Stakeholder consultation records.
- Strategic plan dissemination evidence.
- Annual operational or action plans aligned to the strategic plan.
- Budget and resource allocation documents linked to strategic priorities.
- Strategic performance monitoring reports.
- Strategic review and improvement reports.

1.3 Institutional and Academic Leadership

Standard 1.3.1
The HEP **must** establish, document and disseminate selection criteria, including job descriptions, qualification, experience requirements, and selection mechanisms for institutional and academic leaders at the department and programme levels.

Standard 1.3.2
The selection process for institutional and academic leaders **must** lead to the appointment of a qualified candidate for each position.

Standard 1.3.3
The HEP **must** have a plan for leadership training and development, and implement it to enhance the capabilities of current and future institutional and academic leaders.

Standard 1.3.4
The HEP **must** evaluate institutional and academic leaders at specified intervals based on their performance as stipulated in their job descriptions and in relation to the achievement of the vision, mission and institutional goals.

Attainment Level Rubrics (Criterion 1.3)

Attainment Level	Description
1	The HEP fulfils **NONE** of the following: ● Establishes, documents and disseminates selection criteria, including job descriptions, qualification and experience requirements, and selection mechanisms for institutional and academic leaders at the department and programme levels. ● Has a selection process for institutional and academic leaders that leads to the appointment of a qualified candidate for each position. ● Has a plan for leadership training and development, and implements it to enhance the capabilities of current and future institutional and academic leaders. ● Evaluates the leaders at specified intervals based on their performance as stipulated in their job descriptions and in relation to the achievement of the vision, mission and institutional goals.
2	The HEP fulfils **PARTIALLY** or **AT LEAST ONE** of the following: ● Establishes, documents and disseminates selection criteria, including job descriptions, qualification and experience requirements, and selection mechanisms for institutional and academic leaders at the department and programme levels. ● Has a selection process for institutional and academic leaders that leads to the appointment of a qualified candidate for each position. ● Has a plan for leadership training and development, and implements it to enhance the capabilities of current and future institutional and academic leaders. ● Evaluates the leaders at specified intervals based on their performance as stipulated in their job descriptions and in relation to the achievement of the vision, mission and institutional goals.

Attainment Level	Description
3	The HEP establishes, documents and disseminates selection criteria, including job descriptions, qualification and experience requirements, and selection mechanisms for institutional and academic leaders at the department and programme levels. The selection process for institutional and academic leaders leads to the appointment of a qualified candidate for each position. The HEP has a plan for leadership training and development, implements it to enhance the capabilities of current and future institutional and academic leaders, and evaluates the leaders at specified intervals based on their performance as stipulated in their job descriptions and in relation to the achievement of the vision, mission and institutional goals.
4	The HEP systematically reviews and enhances its selection and appointment processes for institutional and academic leaders to ensure alignment with evolving institutional needs and strategic priorities. Selection mechanisms are derived from national or international practices and involve structured stakeholder input. Leadership development is structured, competency-based and regularly updated. Performance evaluations are systematic to support leadership improvement and succession planning, with a measurable impact on institutional effectiveness.
5	The HEP demonstrates exemplary leadership practices in the selection, development and evaluation of institutional and academic leaders. Selection and appointment processes are transparent, inclusive and externally benchmarked, resulting in the recruitment of highly effective and visionary leaders. Leadership development is integrated across the institution, strategically resourced and forward-looking. Evaluations are comprehensive, data-driven and directly linked to strategic outcomes.

Examples of Supporting Documents:

- Leadership selection and appointment policy.
- Approved job descriptions for institutional and academic leaders.
- Selection committee terms of reference and minutes.
- Appointment letters and contracts of leaders.
- Leadership development and succession plan.
- Annual leadership training and professional development records.
- Performance evaluation policy and appraisal reports.

1.4 Governance Functions and Mechanisms

Standard 1.4.1

The HEP **must** define and publish its governance structure and functions, which **must** be communicated to all relevant stakeholders based on the principles of authority, accountability and transparency.

Standard 1.4.2
The HEP **must** establish mechanisms that drive functional integration and maintain consistency of educational quality across all campuses.

Standard 1.4.3
The governing board and the senate **must** operate based on the principles of non-conflict, transparency, accountability and authority, with an adequate degree of autonomy.

Attainment Level Rubrics (Criterion 1.4)

Attainment Level	Description
1	The HEP fulfils **NONE** of the following: ● Defines and publishes its governance structure and functions, which are communicated to all relevant stakeholders based on the principles of authority, accountability and transparency. ● Establishes mechanisms that drive functional integration and maintain consistency of educational quality across all campuses. ● Has the governing board and the senate operate based on the principles of non-conflict, transparency, accountability and authority, with an adequate degree of autonomy.
2	The HEP fulfils **PARTIALLY** or **AT LEAST ONE** of the following: ● Defines and publishes its governance structure and functions, which are communicated to all relevant stakeholders based on the principles of authority, accountability and transparency. ● Establishes mechanisms that drive functional integration and maintain consistency of educational quality across all campuses. ● Has the governing board and the senate operate based on the principles of non-conflict, transparency, accountability and authority, with an adequate degree of autonomy.
3	The HEP defines and publishes its governance structure and functions, which are communicated to all relevant stakeholders based on the principles of authority, accountability and transparency. The HEP establishes mechanisms that drive functional integration and maintain consistency of educational quality across all campuses. The governing board and the senate operate based on the principles of non-conflict, transparency, accountability and authority, with an adequate degree of autonomy.
4	The HEP strengthens its governance structure through periodic review and enhancement to ensure strategic alignment, operational efficiency and consistent educational quality across all campuses. Governance functions are clearly defined, well communicated and effectively implemented. The governing board and the senate demonstrate active and effective oversight, with decision-making aligned with institutional goals, and guided by structured policies, stakeholder input and performance data.

Attainment Level	Description
5	The HEP exhibits a dynamic and agile governance structure that is highly transparent and accountable, which is externally benchmarked and widely recognised. The governing board and the senate provide transformational leadership and ensure coherent decision-making aligned with national priorities and global trends. Governance processes are participatory, data-driven and fully integrated across all campuses, ensuring institutional sustainability, innovation and enhancement.

Examples of Supporting Documents:

- Approved governance documents and charters.
- Functional integration standard operating procedures and implementation.
- Board/Senate meeting minutes showing compliance with principles.
- Governance review reports and audits.
- Evidence of stakeholder participation in governance.
- Documentation of decisions that led to institutional improvement.

1.5 Management of Information and Records

Standard 1.5.1
The HEP **must** have information management policies and systems that align with current technology.

Standard 1.5.2
The HEP **must** implement the information management policies and systems to ensure accessibility, privacy, confidentiality and security of all the records.

Attainment Level Rubrics (Criterion 1.5)

Attainment Level	Description
1	The HEP fulfils **NONE** of the following: ● Has information management policies and systems that align with current technology. ● Implements the policies and systems to ensure accessibility, privacy, confidentiality and security of all records.
2	The HEP fulfils **PARTIALLY** or **AT LEAST ONE** of the following: ● Has information management policies and systems that align with current technology. ● Implements the policies and systems to ensure accessibility, privacy, confidentiality and security of all records.
3	The HEP has information management policies and systems that align with current technology, and implements them to ensure accessibility, privacy, confidentiality and security of all records.

Attainment Level	Description
4	The HEP regularly reviews and enhances its information management policies and systems to align with technological advancements. Systems are accessible across the entire institution, enabling efficient data sharing while ensuring regulatory compliance.
5	The HEP demonstrates an information management system that is fully integrated and supports strategic planning, academic management, governance and quality assurance. Policies and systems are benchmarked and continually improved through proactive risk management and stakeholder feedback.

Examples of Supporting Documents:

- Endorsed policy documents.
- Information and communications technology infrastructure with audit trail capability.
- Secure and accessible digital record system.
- Information technology governance framework.
- Results of data audits and penetration testing.
- Evidence of interoperability and integration across units.
- Analytics dashboards used by the management.

1.6 Institutional Sustainability

Standard 1.6.1
The HEP **must** institutionalise strategies for sustainability, encompassing governance, capacity building, quality assurance and risk assessment, supported by adequate resources.

Attainment Level Rubrics (Criterion 1.6)

Attainment Level	Description
1	The HEP **DOES NOT** institutionalise strategies for sustainability that encompass governance, capacity building, quality assurance and risk assessment, and is not supported by appropriate resources.
2	The HEP **PARTIALLY** institutionalises strategies for sustainability that encompass governance, capacity building, quality assurance and risk assessment, and is not supported by adequate resources.
3	The HEP institutionalises strategies for sustainability encompassing governance, capacity building, quality assurance and risk assessment, supported by adequate resources.

Attainment Level	Description
4	The sustainability agenda is implemented across institutional frameworks, linking governance, internal quality assurance processes, risk management and capacity building to the HEP's vision. Implementation is monitored to ensure coherence with its strategic objectives and direction.
5	The HEP demonstrates excellence in institutional sustainability, recognised for its future-ready, systemic and data-driven strategies. Governance, quality assurance, capacity building and resource mobilisation are benchmarked and tied to long-term institutional transformation.

Examples of Supporting Documents:

- Strategic plan incorporating sustainability pillars.
- Approved capacity-building and staff development frameworks.
- Annual budget lines for quality assurance and governance strengthening.
- Internal audits on sustainability planning and execution.

AREA 2: ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT

2.1 Learning Outcomes

Standard 2.1.1
The HEP **must** have mechanisms to align the learning outcomes of its programmes with the Malaysian Qualifications Framework (MQF), which **must** be implemented in curriculum design and delivery.

Standard 2.1.2
The HEP **must** specify the link between the educational objectives of its programmes and the graduates' competencies and attributes required for career undertakings, further study opportunities and good citizenship.

Attainment Level Rubrics (Criterion 2.1)

Attainment Level	Description
1	The HEP fulfils **NONE** of the following: ● Has mechanisms to align the learning outcomes of its programmes with the MQF, which are implemented in curriculum design and delivery. ● Specifies the link between the educational objectives of its programmes and the graduates' competencies and attributes required for career undertakings, further study opportunities and good citizenship.
2	The HEP fulfils **PARTIALLY** or **AT LEAST ONE** of the following: ● Has mechanisms to align the learning outcomes of its programmes with the MQF, which are implemented in curriculum design and delivery. ● Specifies the link between the educational objectives of its programmes and the graduates' competencies and attributes required for career undertakings, further study opportunities and good citizenship.
3	The HEP has mechanisms to align the learning outcomes of its programmes with the MQF, which are implemented in curriculum design and delivery. The HEP also specifies the link between the educational objectives of its programmes and the graduates' competencies and attributes required for career undertakings, further study opportunities and good citizenship.

Attainment Level	Description
4	The HEP employs a systematic approach by aligning programme learning outcomes with the MQF through outcome-based education, ensuring that curriculum design, delivery and assessment are constructively aligned to nurture graduates' competencies for employability, further education and good citizenship. This is reinforced through regular inputs involving industry, academics and relevant communities to maintain relevance and responsiveness to national and global demands.
5	The HEP embeds the MQF clusters into programme learning outcomes through a robust outcome-based education model or other relevant frameworks or benchmarks, ensuring curriculum design, delivery and assessment are constructively aligned to foster holistic graduate attributes. Quality enhancement is achieved through active engagement with stakeholders to ensure programmes remain relevant, future ready and aligned with national aspirations for employability, lifelong learning and good citizenship.

Examples of Supporting Documents:

- Endorsed programme learning outcomes mapped to the MQF.
- Curriculum map showing alignment to programme educational objectives and the MQF domains.
- Documentation of curriculum review committee input.
- Programme learning outcomes review reports and stakeholder consultation minutes.
- Mapping matrix to the MQF, Sustainable Development Goals or professional standards.
- Evidence of periodic validation by industry and alumni.
- External validation (e.g., accreditation, employer surveys).

2.2 Programme Development

Standard 2.2.1
The HEP **must** have processes for curriculum design and review involving academic staff, programme management and relevant units or bodies at both departmental and institutional levels, incorporating needs assessments and the availability of resources.

Standard 2.2.2
The curricula **must** be analysed through comprehensive needs assessments, incorporating feedback from internal and external sources, including market demands, stakeholder input and aspects of the Global Sustainability Agenda, to ensure currency and relevance.

Standard 2.2.3
The programmes **must** be aligned with and support the HEP's vision and mission, covering topics relevant to industry or stakeholder needs, as well as matters of national and international importance, and **must** comply with all relevant standards.

Standard 2.2.4
The programmes **must** include essential disciplinary core content that supports the programme learning outcomes and reflects current concepts, principles and methods.

Attainment Level Rubrics (Criterion 2.2)

Attainment Level	Description
1	The HEP fulfils **NONE** of the following: ● Has processes for curriculum design and review involving academic staff, programme management and relevant units or bodies at both departmental and institutional levels, incorporating needs assessments and the availability of resources. ● Has its curricula analysed through comprehensive needs assessments, incorporating feedback from internal and external sources, including market demands, stakeholder input and aspects of the Global Sustainability Agenda, to ensure currency and relevance. ● Has its programmes align with and support the HEP's vision and mission, covering topics relevant to industry or stakeholder needs, as well as matters of national and international importance, and complying with all relevant standards. ● Has its programmes include essential disciplinary core content that supports the programme learning outcomes and reflects current concepts, principles and methods.
2	The HEP fulfils **PARTIALLY** or **AT LEAST ONE** of the following: ● Has processes for curriculum design and review involving academic staff, programme management and relevant units or bodies at both departmental and institutional levels, incorporating needs assessments and the availability of resources. ● Has its curricula analysed through comprehensive needs assessments, incorporating feedback from internal and external sources, including market demands, stakeholder input and aspects of the Global Sustainability Agenda, to ensure currency and relevance. ● Has its programmes align with and support the HEP's vision and mission, covering topics relevant to industry or stakeholder needs, as well as matters of national and international importance, and complying with all relevant standards. ● Has its programmes include essential disciplinary core content that supports the programme learning outcomes and reflects current concepts, principles and methods.

Attainment Level	Description
3	The HEP has processes for curriculum design and review involving academic staff, programme management and relevant units or bodies at both departmental and institutional levels, incorporating needs assessments and the availability of resources. The curricula are analysed through comprehensive needs assessments, incorporating feedback from internal and external sources, including market demands, stakeholder input and aspects of the Global Sustainability Agenda, to ensure currency and relevance. The programmes are aligned with and support the HEP's vision and mission, covering topics relevant to industry or stakeholder needs, as well as matters of national and international importance, and comply with all relevant standards. The programmes also include essential disciplinary core content that supports the programme learning outcomes and reflects current concepts, principles and methods.
4	The programmes align with the HEP's educational goals, showing clear integration with the intended graduate attributes. The HEP implements comprehensive and cyclical programme development review processes that integrate internal and external stakeholder feedback and emerging trends. The effectiveness of curriculum design is regularly validated through graduate outcomes and external recognition.
5	The HEP demonstrates good practice in programme development, with innovative design approaches (e.g., micro-credentials, interdisciplinary modules) and alignment with future global trends. The programmes are highly responsive to industry and global needs, providing transformative learning experiences and educational impacts.

Examples of Supporting Documents:

- Curriculum committee terms of reference and meeting records.
- Market survey or tracer study results.
- Curriculum matrix showing alignment to vision, mission and programme learning outcomes.
- Curriculum review schedule and evidence of changes.
- Minutes from the external panel/industry advisory committee.
- Curriculum benchmarking reports.

2.3 Programme Delivery

Standard 2.3.1

The HEP **must** employ a variety of teaching and learning methods and activities in the delivery of its curricula to cover all the learning outcome clusters, where these methods and activities **must** be aligned to support the attainment of programme learning outcomes, promote student-centred learning and nurture holistic student development.

Standard 2.3.2

The HEP **must** offer co-curricular activities to enrich student experiences, fostering personal development and responsibility. (*Note: This standard is not applicable to Open and Distance Learning (ODL) programmes and postgraduate programmes, where relevant.*)

Attainment Level Rubrics (Criterion 2.3)

Attainment Level	Description
1	The HEP fulfils **NONE** of the following: ● Employs a variety of teaching and learning methods and activities in the delivery of its curricula to cover all the learning outcome clusters, where these methods and activities are aligned to support the attainment of programme learning outcomes, promote student-centred learning and nurture holistic student development. ● Offers co-curricular activities to enrich student experiences, fostering personal development and responsibility. (*Note: This clause may not be applicable to ODL and postgraduate programmes.*)
2	The HEP fulfils **PARTIALLY** or **AT LEAST ONE** of the following: ● Employs a variety of teaching and learning methods and activities in the delivery of its curricula to cover all the learning outcome clusters, where these methods and activities are aligned to support the attainment of programme learning outcomes, promote student-centred learning and nurture holistic student development. ● Offers co-curricular activities to enrich student experiences, fostering personal development and responsibility. (*Note: This clause may not be applicable to ODL and postgraduate programmes.*)
3	The HEP employs a variety of teaching and learning methods and activities in the delivery of its curricula to cover all the learning outcome clusters, where these methods and activities are aligned to support the attainment of programme learning outcomes, promote student-centred learning and nurture holistic student development. The HEP also offers co-curricular activities to enrich student experiences, fostering personal development and responsibility. (*Note: This clause is not applicable to ODL and postgraduate programmes.*)

Attainment Level	Description
4	The HEP demonstrates systematic delivery through curriculum innovation, integration of educational technologies and learning analytics. Delivery methods are regularly reviewed, diversified by discipline and support diverse learner needs, as well as contribute to sustained engagement and inclusivity. Co-curricular activities are well structured, monitored and aligned with graduate attributes and regularly evaluated for effectiveness in promoting student development.
5	The HEP demonstrates future-ready delivery models that may include innovative, personalised and adaptive learning, with the integration of interdisciplinary content, digital tools and authentic problem-solving. Programme delivery contributes to pedagogical advancements.

Examples of Supporting Documents:

- Approved course information sheets with teaching and learning methods.
- Evidence of active learning methods.
- Co-curricular activity plans or reports.
- Student feedback reports on delivery.
- Blended/Online learning integration reports.
- Peer observation and teaching portfolio audits.
- Learner engagement analytics dashboards.
- Co-curricular tracking systems.

2.4 Learning Assessment

Standard 2.4.1
The HEP **must** establish policies and mechanisms to address validity, reliability, transparency and fairness of student assessments, consistent with relevant educational standards.

Standard 2.4.2
The HEP **must** provide sufficient autonomy to relevant departments to develop and review assessment criteria and methodologies, comprising formative and summative components and incorporating good practices.

Standard 2.4.3
The methods of student assessment, plagiarism policies, grading criteria and assessment results **must** be documented and communicated to students at appropriate schedules.

Attainment Level Rubrics (Criterion 2.4)

Attainment Level	Description
1	The HEP fulfils **NONE** of the following: ● Establishes policies and mechanisms to address validity, reliability, transparency and fairness of student assessments, consistent with relevant educational standards. ● Provides sufficient autonomy to relevant departments to develop and review assessment criteria and methodologies, comprising formative and summative components and incorporating good practices. ● Has methods of student assessment, plagiarism policies, grading criteria and assessment results documented and communicated to students at appropriate schedules.
2	The HEP fulfils **PARTIALLY** or **AT LEAST ONE** of the following: ● Establishes policies and mechanisms to address validity, reliability, transparency and fairness of student assessments, consistent with relevant educational standards. ● Provides sufficient autonomy to relevant departments to develop and review assessment criteria and methodologies, comprising formative and summative components and incorporating good practices. ● Has methods of student assessment, plagiarism policies, grading criteria and assessment results documented and communicated to students at appropriate schedules.
3	The HEP establishes policies and mechanisms to address validity, reliability, transparency and fairness of student assessments, consistent with relevant educational standards. The HEP also provides sufficient autonomy to relevant departments to develop and review assessment criteria and methodologies, comprising formative and summative components and incorporating good practices. The methods of student assessment, plagiarism policies, grading criteria and assessment results are documented and communicated to students at appropriate schedules.
4	The HEP's assessment system is well developed, disseminated and regularly monitored. Verification and validation activities of the assessment are implemented effectively across the programmes with the use of data analytics to support improvement.
5	The HEP demonstrates good assessment practices, incorporating innovative assessment approaches such as authentic and alternative assessments. These practices have demonstrable impact on student performance, pedagogical innovation and achievement of graduate attributes.

Examples of Supporting Documents:

- Approved institutional assessment policy.
- Programme-level and course-level assessment mapping.
- Documented rubrics, moderation reports and feedback procedures.
- Student assessment handbooks or course briefs.
- Assessment improvement plans and review cycles.
- Quality assurance reports on assessment consistency and impact.

2.5 Programme Management

Standard 2.5.1
The HEP **must** have policies to provide students with current and comprehensive information about the programme learning outcomes, curriculum structure and content, assessment methods and results, as well as the appeal process and any other changes related to the programme.

Standard 2.5.2
The HEP **must** have mechanisms to allocate the necessary support and resources for implementing teaching, learning and assessment activities.

Standard 2.5.3
Each programme **must** have an appropriate full-time programme leader and a team of academic staff who have the authority and responsibility for programme planning, implementation, monitoring, self-review and continual quality improvement.

Standard 2.5.4
Programmes **must** undergo regular review, incorporating feedback from academic staff, students and educational experts, which may include programme advisors and examiners, for quality assurance and continual quality improvement.

Attainment Level Rubrics (Criterion 2.5)

Attainment Level	Description
1	The HEP fulfils **NONE** of the following: ● Has policies to provide students with current and comprehensive information about the programme learning outcomes, curriculum structure and content, assessment methods and results, as well as the appeal process and any other changes related to the programme. ● Has mechanisms to allocate the necessary support and resources for implementing teaching, learning and assessment activities. ● Has an appropriate full-time programme leader for each programme and a team of academic staff who have the authority and responsibility for programme planning, implementation, monitoring, self-review and continual quality improvement. ● Has its programmes undergo regular review, incorporating feedback from academic staff, students and educational experts, which may include programme advisors and examiners, for quality assurance and continual quality improvement.
2	The HEP fulfils **PARTIALLY** or **AT LEAST ONE** of the following: ● Has policies to provide students with current and comprehensive information about the programme learning outcomes, curriculum structure and content, assessment methods and results, as well as the appeal process and any other changes related to the programme. ● Has mechanisms to allocate the necessary support and resources for implementing teaching, learning and assessment activities. ● Has an appropriate full-time programme leader for each programme and a team of academic staff who have the authority and responsibility for programme planning, implementation, monitoring, self-review and continual quality improvement. ● Has its programmes undergo regular review, incorporating feedback from academic staff, students and educational experts, which may include programme advisors and examiners, for quality assurance and continual quality improvement.

Attainment Level	Description
3	The HEP has policies to provide students with current and comprehensive information about the programme learning outcomes, curriculum structure and content, assessment methods and results, as well as the appeal process and any other changes related to the programme. The HEP also has mechanisms to allocate necessary support and resources for implementing teaching, learning and assessment activities. A programme has an appropriate full-time programme leader and a team of academic staff who have the authority and responsibility for programme planning, implementation, monitoring, self-review and continual quality improvement. The programmes undergo regular review, incorporating feedback from academic staff, students and educational experts, which may include programme advisors and examiners, for quality assurance and continual quality improvement.
4	The HEP has robust programme management structures, with clearly documented roles of personnel assisting the programme leader, data analytics and performance indicators, review mechanisms and decision-making processes. Data is integrated, real time and regularly analysed for continual quality improvement. Programme-level continual quality improvement initiatives and action plans are monitored and linked to the educational goals and institutional strategic objectives.
5	The HEP demonstrates excellence in programme management through agile and responsive leadership, the strategic use of data analytics and integrated planning that aligns teaching, assessment and resource allocation. The programme management system is externally recognised, adaptable across disciplines and referred to as good practices.

Examples of Supporting Documents:

- Programme management guidelines or standard operating procedures.
- Evidence of regular programme-level meetings and decisions.
- Reports on student progression, course performance and graduate outcomes.
- Role performance evaluations.
- Documentation related to programme continual improvement and enhancement.
- Annual programme review reports with action tracking.

AREA 3: STUDENT EXPERIENCE AND SUPPORT

3.1 Student Admission

(A) Student Admission Policies

Standard 3.1.1
The HEP **must** have policies and processes for student admission, including admission criteria, appeal mechanisms and processes for transfer and exchange students, which **must** be publicly accessible and updated according to regulatory requirements and relevant standards.

Standard 3.1.2
Student intake numbers, including visiting, exchange and transfer students, **must** reflect the HEP's resource capacity to deliver the programmes effectively.

Attainment Level Rubrics (Criterion 3.1A)

Attainment Level	Description
1	The HEP fulfils **NONE** of the following: ● Has policies and processes for student admission, including admission criteria, appeal mechanisms and processes for transfer and exchange students, which are publicly accessible and updated according to regulatory requirements and relevant standards. ● Has student intake numbers, including visiting, exchange and transfer students, that reflect the HEP's resource capacity to deliver the programmes effectively.
2	The HEP fulfils **PARTIALLY** or **AT LEAST ONE** of the following: ● Has policies and processes for student admission, including admission criteria, appeal mechanisms and processes for transfer and exchange students, which are publicly accessible and updated according to regulatory requirements and relevant standards. ● Has student intake numbers, including visiting, exchange and transfer students, that reflect the HEP's resource capacity to deliver the programmes effectively.
3	The HEP has policies and processes for student admission, including admission criteria, appeal mechanisms and processes for transfer and exchange students, which are publicly accessible and updated according to regulatory requirements and relevant standards. Student intake numbers, including visiting, exchange and transfer students, reflect the HEP's resource capacity to deliver the programmes effectively.

Attainment Level	Description
4	The HEP implements an integrated admission policy that is data driven, transparent, resourceful and regularly reviewed. The policy includes provisions for equity, accessibility and alignment with the institutional goals.
5	The admission policy incorporates innovative features such as artificial intelligence-assisted screening and early alert mechanisms for pre-admission mitigation. These practices are recognised externally, setting a benchmark for excellence in admissions management.

Examples of Supporting Documents:

- Approved admission policy.
- Prospectuses, websites and brochures with verified admission criteria.
- Records of admission decisions and appeals.
- Annual review of admission criteria.
- Demographic admission trend analysis.
- Outreach initiatives for underserved groups.

(B) Student Admission Processes

Standard 3.1.3
The HEP **must** specify and communicate the entry prerequisites to prospective students, including selection interviews and other rigorous assessments, where necessary.

Standard 3.1.4
Student selection **must** adhere to the principles of fairness and transparency throughout the process, including the selection of students with special needs.

Standard 3.1.5
The HEP **must** have provisions to offer necessary developmental or remedial support for students requiring additional assistance, which **must** be reviewed regularly for continual improvement.

Attainment Level Rubrics (Criterion 3.1B)

Attainment Level	Description
1	The HEP fulfils **NONE** of the following: ● Specifies and communicates the entry prerequisites to prospective students, including selection interviews and other rigorous assessments, where necessary. ● Has student selection that adheres to the principles of fairness and transparency throughout the process, including the selection of students with special needs. ● Has provisions to offer necessary developmental or remedial support for students requiring additional assistance, which are reviewed regularly for continual improvement.
2	The HEP fulfils **PARTIALLY** or **AT LEAST ONE** of the following: ● Specifies and communicates the entry prerequisites to prospective students, including selection interviews and other rigorous assessments, where necessary. ● Has student selection that adheres to the principles of fairness and transparency throughout the process, including the selection of students with special needs. ● Has provisions to offer necessary developmental or remedial support for students requiring additional assistance, which are reviewed regularly for continual improvement.
3	The HEP specifies and communicates the entry prerequisites to prospective students, including selection interviews and other rigorous assessments, where necessary. Student selection adheres to the principles of fairness and transparency throughout the process, including the selection of students with special needs. The HEP also has provisions to offer necessary developmental or remedial support for students requiring additional assistance, which are reviewed regularly for continual improvement.
4	The HEP implements and improves a data-informed admission process, supported by data analytics. Prerequisites and pre-admission assessments are clearly specified and monitored. Provisions for students with special needs are integrated into selection mechanisms and receive targeted support throughout the admission and transition phases. Developmental and remedial support services are well established and personalised, and their effectiveness is monitored through measurable learning outcomes and feedback loops.
5	The HEP demonstrates admission practices that are predictive, inclusive and externally recognised. Systems may include artificial intelligence-assisted admission screening, equity-focused analytics and adaptable pathways. Support mechanisms are impact-assessed and recognised as good practice across the sector.

Examples of Supporting Documents:

- Admission handbook, prospectus or website with full entry criteria.
- Documented selection rubrics and interview records.
- Policy for handling students with special needs.
- Support centre or remedial programme schedules.
- Review reports on the effectiveness of support services.

3.2 Mobility and Credit Transfer

Standard 3.2.1
The HEP **must** have policies and mechanisms to support mobility and transfer students, including articulation arrangements and credit transfer, to enable students to integrate and progress in their programmes, where these policies and mechanisms **must** be updated regularly.

Attainment Level Rubrics (Criterion 3.2)

Attainment Level	Description
1	The HEP does not have any policy or mechanism to support mobility and transfer students, including articulation arrangements and credit transfer, to enable students to integrate and progress in their programmes.
2	The HEP has policies and/or mechanisms to support mobility and transfer students, including articulation arrangements and credit transfer, to enable students to integrate and progress in their programmes, but these policies and mechanisms may not be regularly updated.
3	The HEP has policies and mechanisms to support mobility and transfer students, including articulation arrangements and credit transfer, to enable students to integrate and progress in their programmes, where these policies and mechanisms are updated regularly.
4	The HEP's mobility and credit transfer policies and mechanisms are strategically implemented, supported through institutional coordination and continually improved based on stakeholder feedback. Participation in student mobility, transfer and exchange programmes is monitored efficiently and integrated into institutional strategic planning.
5	Mobility and transfer systems and mechanisms are adaptive, inclusive and internationally recognised, incorporating innovative approaches, such as micro-credentials, Collaborative Online International Learning and hybrid exchanges. Mobility and transfer initiatives show strong outcomes in terms of student integration, retention and success.

Examples of Supporting Documents:

- Endorsed institutional policies.
- Documented credit transfer procedures.
- Memoranda of understanding for local/international mobility.
- Periodic policy reviews with updates.
- Mobility and credit audit reports.
- Student satisfaction data.
- Updated articulation arrangements.
- Annual reporting of participation and impact.

3.3 Student Support Services

Standard 3.3.1
The HEP **must** have policies for providing and managing student support services for a total learning experience, which **must** be regularly monitored, reviewed and continually improved.

Standard 3.3.2
The HEP **must** provide access to appropriate and adequate student support services, including physical, social, financial and recreational facilities, as well as counselling and health services, with mechanisms for student feedback and grievances.

Attainment Level Rubrics (Criterion 3.3)

Attainment Level	Description
1	The HEP fulfils **NONE** of the following: ● Has policies for providing and managing student support services for a total learning experience, which are not regularly monitored, reviewed or continually improved. ● Provides access to appropriate and adequate student support services, including physical, social, financial and recreational facilities, as well as counselling and health services, with mechanisms for student feedback and grievances.
2	The HEP fulfils **PARTIALLY** or **AT LEAST ONE** of the following: ● Has policies for providing and managing student support services for a total learning experience, which are not regularly monitored, reviewed or continually improved. ● Provides access to appropriate and adequate student support services, including physical, social, financial and recreational facilities, as well as counselling and health services, with mechanisms for student feedback and grievances.

Attainment Level	Description
3	The HEP has policies for providing and managing student support services for a total learning experience, which are regularly monitored, reviewed and continually improved. The HEP also provides access to appropriate and adequate student support services, including physical, social, financial and recreational facilities, as well as counselling and health services, with mechanisms for student feedback and grievances.
4	The HEP's student support services are systematically implemented, integrated across physical and digital platforms, and regularly evaluated and encompass all dimensions of student well-being and academic support. Utilisation data, feedback cycles and performance indicators are employed for continual improvement.
5	The HEP exhibits student support systems, characterised by proactive, personalised, outcome-focused approaches and assisted by appropriate technologies. The systems are benchmarked, scalable and externally recognised, and contribute significantly to transformative student outcomes and measurable institutional impact.

Examples of Supporting Documents:

- Approved student support policy.
- Accessible counselling, wellness and financial aid services.
- Grievance redress platform.
- Periodic review reports with documented enhancements.
- Feedback surveys (satisfaction, accessibility).
- Online portals, mobile apps for service access.
- Reports of service improvements based on analytics.

3.4 Student Development

Standard 3.4.1
The HEP **must** have policies on student development to provide a total learning experience and to prepare students for the workplace.

Standard 3.4.2
The HEP **must** implement student development and other extracurricular activities to inculcate character building, a sense of belonging and responsibility, active citizenship and an entrepreneurial mindset.

Standard 3.4.3
The policies and activities for student development **must** be regularly monitored, reviewed and continually improved.

Attainment Level Rubrics (Criterion 3.4)

Attainment Level	Description
1	The HEP fulfils **NONE** of the following: ● Has policies on student development to support a total learning experience and to prepare students for the workplace. ● Implements student development and other extracurricular activities to inculcate character building, a sense of belonging and responsibility, active citizenship and an entrepreneurial mindset. ● Has student development policies and activities that are monitored, reviewed and continually improved.
2	The HEP fulfils **PARTIALLY** or **AT LEAST ONE** of the following: ● Has policies on student development to support a total learning experience and to prepare students for the workplace. ● Implements student development and other extracurricular activities to inculcate character building, a sense of belonging and responsibility, active citizenship and an entrepreneurial mindset. ● Has student development policies and activities that are monitored, reviewed and continually improved.
3	The HEP has policies on student development to provide a total learning experience and to prepare students for the workplace. The HEP implements student development and other extracurricular activities to inculcate character building, a sense of belonging and responsibility, active citizenship and an entrepreneurial mindset. The policies and activities for student development are regularly monitored, reviewed and continually improved.
4	The HEP's student development policies and activities are institutionalised, inclusive and integrated across programmes. Activities are evidence informed, monitored using learning analytics, and aligned with academic advisory systems.
5	The student support systems are externally recognised, aligned to institutional strategic objectives and can be referred to as good practice. The HEP engages relevant stakeholders who enhance the delivery of impactful student development.

Examples of Supporting Documents:

- Approved student development framework.
- Records of structured co-/extracurricular programmes.
- Annual review reports and revision logs.
- Mapping to graduate attributes.
- Partnerships for civic, entrepreneurial or global mobility activities.

3.5 Student Representation and Empowerment

Standard 3.5.1
The HEP **must** have policies on adequate student representation and participation in institutional and departmental governance, with appropriate rights and responsibilities, and avenues for engagement in academic, non-academic and welfare-related matters.

Standard 3.5.2
The HEP must promote student empowerment to engage in community, national and global agendas, guided by an appropriate code of conduct.

Attainment Level Rubrics (Criterion 3.5)

Attainment Level	Description
1	The HEP fulfils **NONE** of the following: ● Has policies on adequate student representation and participation in institutional and departmental governance, with appropriate rights and responsibilities, and avenues for engagement in academic, non-academic and welfare-related matters. ● Promotes student empowerment to engage in community, national and global agendas, guided by an appropriate code of conduct.
2	The HEP fulfils **PARTIALLY** or **AT LEAST ONE** of the following: ● Has policies on adequate student representation and participation in institutional and departmental governance, with appropriate rights and responsibilities, and avenues for engagement in academic, non-academic and welfare-related matters. ● Promotes student empowerment to engage in community, national and global agendas, guided by an appropriate code of conduct.
3	The HEP has policies on adequate student representation and participation in institutional and departmental governance, with appropriate rights and responsibilities, and avenues for engagement in academic, non-academic and welfare-related matters. The HEP also promotes student empowerment to engage in community, national and global agendas, guided by an appropriate code of conduct.
4	Student representation is systematically embedded across all levels within the HEP, with clearly defined roles and supported by structured training for governance literacy and ethical leadership. Empowerment is nurtured through active participation in civic, global and sustainability initiatives, with student engagement monitored through outcome-based mechanisms.

Attainment Level	Description
5	The HEP demonstrates good practice in student governance and empowerment, with a culture that is benchmarked and recognised at national or international levels. Outcomes of student participation and empowerment are regularly assessed and have led to measurable improvements in institutional governance, social impact and global visibility.

Examples of Supporting Documents:

- Constitution or policy for the student council/student union.
- Minutes showing student representative involvement in the senate or departmental boards.
- Participation in national student conferences.
- Code of conduct documentation.
- Election standard operating procedures and leadership training logs.

3.6 Alumni

Standard 3.6.1
The HEP **must** foster active and continuous engagement with its alumni, leveraging their network for student professional growth and linkages with stakeholders.

Standard 3.6.2
The HEP **must** provide platforms and avenues for alumni to give back to the institution, thereby enhancing the HEP's reputation nationally and globally.

Attainment Level Rubrics (Criterion 3.6)

Attainment Level	Description
1	The HEP fulfils **NONE** of the following: ● Fosters active and continuous engagement with its alumni, leveraging their network for student professional growth and linkages with stakeholders. ● Provides platforms and avenues for alumni to give back to the institution, thereby enhancing the HEP's reputation nationally and globally.
2	The HEP fulfils **PARTIALLY** or **AT LEAST ONE** of the following: ● Fosters active and continuous engagement with its alumni, leveraging their network for student professional growth and linkages with stakeholders. ● Provides platforms and avenues for alumni to give back to the institution, thereby enhancing the HEP's reputation nationally and globally.

Attainment Level	Description
3	The HEP fosters active and continuous engagement with its alumni, leveraging their network for student professional growth and linkages with stakeholders. The HEP also provides platforms and avenues for alumni to give back to the institution, thereby enhancing the HEP's reputation nationally and globally.
4	The HEP implements a structured and strategic alumni engagement system aligned with institutional priorities. Engagement is supported by data analytics, feedback mechanisms and sustained outreach programmes. Alumni actively contribute to curriculum enhancement, employability development and branding efforts. The engagement activities are monitored institutionally, thus strengthening alumni relations and visibility.
5	The HEP demonstrates alumni engagement and networks that are externally recognised and significantly contribute to institutional advancement, including governance, employability, internationalisation and social impact. Alumni-driven initiatives measurably strengthen the HEP's reputation.

Examples of Supporting Documents:

- Alumni engagement policy or strategy.
- Career talks, mentorship or internships supported by alumni.
- Alumni contributions to fundraising or strategic promotion.
- Tracked engagement data and testimonial feedback.

AREA 4: TALENT AND RESOURCES

4.1 Academic Staff

(A) Human Resource Policies

Standard 4.1.1
The HEP **must** have a merit-based human resource policy to plan, recruit, develop, assess, reward and promote academic staff in line with its vision, mission and institutional goals.

Standard 4.1.2
The department **must** ensure an adequate number of academic staff, with an appropriate staff-to-student ratio, to teach, supervise and assess learning outcomes for each programme according to relevant standards.

Attainment Level Rubrics (Criterion 4.1A)

Attainment Level	Description
1	The HEP fulfils **NONE** of the following: ● Has a merit-based human resource policy to plan, recruit, develop, assess, reward and promote academic staff in line with its vision, mission and institutional goals. ● Ensures an adequate number of academic staff, with an appropriate staff-to-student ratio, to teach, supervise and assess learning outcomes for each programme according to relevant standards.
2	The HEP fulfils **PARTIALLY** or **AT LEAST ONE** of the following: ● Has a merit-based human resource policy to plan, recruit, develop, assess, reward and promote academic staff in line with its vision, mission and institutional goals. ● Ensures an adequate number of academic staff, with an appropriate staff-to-student ratio, to teach, supervise and assess learning outcomes for each programme according to relevant standards.
3	The HEP has a merit-based human resource policy to plan, recruit, develop, assess, reward and promote academic staff in line with its vision, mission and institutional goals. The HEP also ensures an adequate number of academic staff, with an appropriate staff-to-student ratio, to teach, supervise and assess learning outcomes for each programme according to relevant standards.
4	The HEP effectively implements and reviews the human resource policy and monitors it strategically to align with its institutional vision, mission and goals. Staff-to-student ratios are continuously monitored and optimised to ensure effective programme delivery.

Attainment Level	Description
5	The HEP demonstrates responsive academic talent management with technology-driven workforce analytics, which are benchmarked and recognised to enhance excellence in teaching, research and external engagement.

Examples of Supporting Documents:

- Human resource policy and procedures manual.
- Staff planning and workload reports that align with standards.
- Institutional records of promotions and appraisals.
- Programme audit reports referencing staff sufficiency.
- Evidence of succession planning and workload balance.

(B) Talent Management

Standard 4.1.3
The HEP **must** provide academic staff with sufficient autonomy to focus on areas of their expertise related to education, research and service.

Standard 4.1.4
The HEP **must** implement transparent policies for performance review, recognition and reward based on meritorious academic roles and equitable work distribution, to foster a conducive work environment.

Standard 4.1.5
The HEP **must** have adequate and appropriate training and development programmes for academic staff, including leadership skills through participation in professional activities, research and industry linkages, as well as other relevant activities.

Attainment Level Rubrics (Criterion 4.1B)

Attainment Level	Description
1	The HEP fulfils **NONE** of the following: ● Provides academic staff with sufficient autonomy to focus on areas of their expertise related to education, research and service. ● Implements transparent policies for performance review, recognition and reward based on meritorious academic roles and equitable work distribution, to foster a conducive work environment. ● Provides adequate and appropriate training and development programmes for academic staff, including leadership skills through participation in professional activities, research and industry linkages, as well as other relevant activities.

Attainment Level	Description
2	The HEP fulfils **PARTIALLY** or **AT LEAST ONE** of the following: ● Provides academic staff with sufficient autonomy to focus on areas of their expertise related to education, research and service. ● Implements transparent policies for performance review, recognition and reward based on meritorious academic roles and equitable work distribution, to foster a conducive work environment. ● Provides adequate and appropriate training and development programmes for academic staff, including leadership skills through participation in professional activities, research and industry linkages, as well as other relevant activities.
3	The HEP provides academic staff with sufficient autonomy to focus on areas of their expertise related to education, research and service, and implements transparent policies for performance review, recognition and reward based on meritorious academic roles and equitable work distribution, to foster a conducive work environment. The HEP also provides adequate and appropriate training and development programmes for academic staff, including leadership skills through participation in professional activities, research and industry linkages, as well as other relevant activities.
4	The provision of academic autonomy and conducive work environments supports flexibility, inclusivity and staff-driven innovation with leadership development embedded within career pathways. The reward structures and talent development are institutionalised, data driven and aligned with strategic goals.
5	The HEP demonstrates benchmark-level academic staff talent development aligned with global standards, a merit-based recognition system and transformative leadership development growth opportunities, and contributes to institutional innovation, retention and impact.

Examples of Supporting Documents:

- Workload policy recognising scholarship and service.
- Promotion and salary increment procedures.
- Professional development plan with budget allocation.
- Staff participation in industry-based fellowships or conferences.
- Documented internal fellowships or research sabbaticals.
- Leadership pipelines with tracking mechanisms.

4.2 Non-Academic Staff

Standard 4.2.1
The HEP **must** ensure sufficient and qualified non-academic staff to support institutional activities and agendas.

Standard 4.2.2
The HEP **must** implement transparent policies for performance review, recognition and reward for non-academic staff to support institutional operations.

Standard 4.2.3
The HEP **must** provide adequate and appropriate training and career advancement opportunities for non-academic staff to support institutional activities and agendas.

Attainment Level Rubrics (Criterion 4.2)

Attainment Level	Description
1	The HEP fulfils **NONE** of the following: ● Ensures sufficient and qualified non-academic staff to support institutional activities and agendas. ● Implements transparent policies for performance review, recognition and reward for non-academic staff to support institutional operations. ● Provides adequate and appropriate training and career advancement opportunities for non-academic staff to support institutional activities and agendas.
2	The HEP fulfils **PARTIALLY** or **AT LEAST ONE** of the following: ● Ensures sufficient and qualified non-academic staff to support institutional activities and agendas. ● Implements transparent policies for performance review, recognition and reward for non-academic staff to support institutional operations. ● Provides adequate and appropriate training and career advancement opportunities for non-academic staff to support institutional activities and agendas.
3	The HEP ensures sufficient and qualified non-academic staff to support institutional activities and agendas, and implements transparent policies for performance review, recognition and reward for non-academic staff to support institutional operations. The HEP also provides adequate and appropriate training and career advancement opportunities for non-academic staff to support institutional activities and agendas.
4	The HEP has a structured and monitored talent management system for non-academic staff and provides comprehensive training and career advancement opportunities for them to support institutional activities and agendas.

Attainment Level	Description
5	The HEP demonstrates an excellent talent management system for non-academic staff with recognised practices in capacity building and career advancement. The system is benchmarked and aligned with national talent policies, contributing to institutional reputation and operational excellence.

Examples of Supporting Documents:

- Staff recruitment and qualification matrix.
- Human resource performance management system.
- Records of training attendance and promotion history.
- Internal support staff competency framework.
- Career pathways and leadership development for support staff.

4.3 Physical Resources

Standard 4.3.1
The HEP **must** have clear policies to provide, manage and maintain its physical resources, including physical facilities, equipment and library or resource centres, to support the attainment of programme learning outcomes, the achievement of institutional goals, and other educational and institutional needs.

Standard 4.3.2
The HEP **must** ensure its physical resources fully comply with relevant laws and health and safety regulations, maintaining a safe and conducive learning environment.

Standard 4.3.3
The physical resources **must** be accessible to staff and students, including persons with special needs.

Standard 4.3.4
The HEP **must** regularly review its policies and improve its physical resources according to educational and institutional needs.

Attainment Level Rubrics (Criterion 4.3)

Attainment Level	Description
1	The HEP fulfils **NONE** of the following: ● Has clear policies to provide, manage and maintain its physical resources, including physical facilities, equipment and library or resource centres, to support the attainment of programme learning outcomes, the achievement of institutional goals, and other educational and institutional needs. ● Ensures its physical resources fully comply with relevant laws and health and safety regulations, maintaining a safe and conducive learning environment. ● Has the physical resources accessible to staff and students, including persons with special needs. ● Has its policies regularly reviewed and its physical resources improved according to educational and institutional needs.
2	The HEP fulfils **PARTIALLY** or **AT LEAST ONE** of the following: ● Has clear policies to provide, manage and maintain its physical resources, including physical facilities, equipment and library or resource centres, to support the attainment of programme learning outcomes, the achievement of institutional goals, and other educational and institutional needs. ● Ensures its physical resources fully comply with relevant laws and health and safety regulations, maintaining a safe and conducive learning environment. ● Has the physical resources accessible to staff and students, including persons with special needs. ● Has its policies regularly reviewed and its physical resources improved according to educational and institutional needs.
3	The HEP has clear policies to provide, manage and maintain its physical resources, including physical facilities, equipment and library or resource centres, to support the attainment of programme learning outcomes, the achievement of institutional goals, and other educational and institutional needs. The HEP ensures that its physical resources fully comply with relevant laws and health and safety regulations, maintain a safe and conducive learning environment, and are accessible to staff and students, including persons with special needs. Its policies are regularly reviewed, and its physical resources are improved according to educational and institutional needs.
4	The HEP manages its physical resources through structured and outcome-focused processes that ensure the timely provision, optimal use and regular review of facilities, equipment and resource centres. These processes are effectively coordinated and maintained to ensure compliance with safety regulations and accessibility and to meet educational and institutional needs.

Attainment Level	Description
5	The HEP's physical resource management demonstrates sustainability in resource planning and continuous enhancement guided by institutional priorities and user feedback. The physical facilities are future ready, inclusive and maintained through data analytics that ensure optimal functionality, safety and adaptability.

Examples of Supporting Documents:

- Approved infrastructure policy and guidelines.
- Accessibility audits and improvement plans.
- Facility upgrade logs and safety inspection reports.
- Usage statistics and feedback surveys.
- Reports linking facilities upgrades to curriculum expansion.

4.4 Technological Resources

Standard 4.4.1
The HEP **must** have policies to provide access to appropriate technological resources, including information and communication technology (ICT) facilities and e-learning platforms, to support programme implementation and other educational and institutional needs.

Standard 4.4.2
The HEP must ensure its technological resources fully comply with relevant laws and regulations, and promote secure, ethical and responsible ICT use, while maintaining a safe and supportive learning and working environment.

Standard 4.4.3
The technological resources **must** be made accessible to staff and students, including persons with special needs.

Standard 4.4.4
The HEP **must** regularly review its policies and improve its technological resources according to educational and institutional needs.

Attainment Level Rubrics (Criterion 4.4)

Attainment Level	Description
1	The HEP fulfils **NONE** of the following: ● Has policies to provide access to appropriate technological resources, including ICT facilities and e-learning platforms, to support programme implementation and other educational and institutional needs. ● Has its technological resources comply with relevant laws and regulations, and promotes secure, ethical and responsible ICT use, while maintaining a safe and supportive learning and working environment. ● Has technological resources accessible to all staff and students, including persons with special needs. ● Regularly reviews its policies and improves its technological resources according to educational and institutional needs.
2	The HEP fulfils **PARTIALLY** or **AT LEAST ONE** of the following: ● Has policies to provide access to appropriate technological resources, including ICT facilities and e-learning platforms, to support programme implementation and other educational and institutional needs. ● Has its technological resources comply with relevant laws and regulations, and promotes secure, ethical and responsible ICT use, while maintaining a safe and supportive learning and working environment. ● Has technological resources accessible to all staff and students, including persons with special needs. ● Regularly reviews its policies and improves its technological resources according to educational and institutional needs.
3	The HEP has policies to provide access to appropriate technological resources, including information and communication technology facilities and e-learning platforms, to support programme implementation and other educational and institutional needs. It ensures that its technological resources fully comply with relevant laws and regulations, and promotes secure, ethical and responsible ICT use, while maintaining a safe and supportive learning and working environment. The technological resources are made accessible to staff and students, including persons with special needs. The policies are regularly reviewed, and the technological resources are improved according to educational and institutional needs.
4	The HEP manages its technological resources through structured and outcome-focused processes that ensure timely provision, optimal and ethical use, and regular review of facilities, equipment and digital platforms. These processes are effectively coordinated and maintained to ensure compliance with regulations and accessibility, and to meet the HEP's educational and institutional needs.

Attainment Level	Description
5	The HEP's technological resource management demonstrates sustainability in resource planning and continuous enhancement guided by institutional priorities and user feedback. The technological facilities are future ready, inclusive and maintained through data analytics that ensure optimal functionality and adaptability.

Examples of Supporting Documents:

- ICT governance and e-learning policy.
- Accessibility audits and improvement logs.
- User feedback reports on e-learning platforms.
- Digital infrastructure masterplan.
- Integration with adaptive or assistive technology for inclusivity.
- Recognition for digital campus/ICT innovation.

4.5 Research Resources

Standard 4.5.1
The HEP **must** have policies on research and innovation, which **must** be regularly reviewed, to provide sufficient resources and a conducive research environment for achieving related institutional goals.

Standard 4.5.2
The HEP **must** provide research resources to support programmes with research components in attaining their learning outcomes.

Attainment Level Rubrics (Criterion 4.5)

Attainment Level	Description
1	The HEP fulfils **NONE** of the following: ● Has policies on research and innovation, which are regularly reviewed, to provide sufficient resources and a conducive research environment for achieving related institutional goals. ● Provides research resources to support programmes with research components in attaining their learning outcomes.
2	The HEP fulfils **PARTIALLY** or **AT LEAST ONE** of the following: ● Has policies on research and innovation, which are regularly reviewed, to provide sufficient resources and a conducive research environment for achieving related institutional goals. ● Provides research resources to support programmes with research components in attaining their learning outcomes.

Attainment Level	Description
3	The HEP has policies on research and innovation, which are regularly reviewed, to provide sufficient resources and a conducive research environment for achieving related institutional goals. The HEP also provides research resources to support programmes with research components in attaining their learning outcomes.
4	Resource planning is data driven and responsive to the evolving needs of research programmes, supporting both academic staff and student initiatives. Mechanisms for regular monitoring and utilisation are implemented, supported by stakeholder feedback, thus enabling timely enhancement of research facilities and services to maintain a productive and supportive research environment.
5	The HEP demonstrates a well-established, dynamic ecosystem that advances research excellence through comprehensive resource support and strategic investment. Research infrastructure and services are aligned with national and/or international practices and are optimised to generate impactful outcomes.

Examples of Supporting Documents:

- Institutional research policy and strategic plan.
- Budget allocation records for research grants.
- Evidence of research-linked learning activities.
- Annual reports of funded research projects.
- Recognition in national or global rankings for research.
- Institutional patents, spin-offs or social innovation labs.

4.6 Financial Resources

Standard 4.6.1
The HEP **must** establish and maintain budgetary and procurement procedures to ensure efficient resource utilisation, aligning with institutional goals and demonstrate financial sustainability.

Standard 4.6.2
The HEP **must** establish transparent mechanisms for managing budgets and allocating resources to departments based on their needs, with clear lines of duty and authority.

Standard 4.6.3
The HEP **must** provide the department responsible for a programme with sufficient autonomy to allocate resources appropriately in order to attain the programme learning outcomes and maintain high educational standards.

Attainment Level Rubrics (Criterion 4.6)

Attainment Level	Description
1	The HEP fulfils **NONE** of the following: ● Establishes and maintains budgetary and procurement procedures to ensure efficient resource utilisation, aligning with institutional goals and demonstrate financial sustainability. ● Establishes transparent mechanisms for managing budgets and allocating resources to departments based on their needs, with clear lines of duty and authority. ● Provides the department responsible for a programme with sufficient autonomy to allocate resources appropriately in order to attain the programme learning outcomes and maintain high educational standards.
2	The HEP fulfils **PARTIALLY** or **AT LEAST ONE** of the following: ● Establishes and maintains budgetary and procurement procedures to ensure efficient resource utilisation, aligning with institutional goals and demonstrate financial sustainability. ● Establishes transparent mechanisms for managing budgets and allocating resources to departments based on their needs, with clear lines of duty and authority. ● Provides the department responsible for a programme with sufficient autonomy to allocate resources appropriately in order to attain the programme learning outcomes and maintain high educational standards.
3	The HEP establishes and maintains budgetary and procurement procedures to ensure efficient resource utilisation, aligning with institutional goals and demonstrate financial sustainability. The HEP also establishes transparent mechanisms for managing budgets and allocating resources to departments based on their needs, with clear lines of duty and authority. The HEP provides the department responsible for a programme with sufficient autonomy to allocate resources appropriately in order to attain the programme learning outcomes and maintain high educational standards.
4	The HEP operates an integrated financial management system that enables effective planning, allocation and monitoring of resources. Departments and units have autonomy to ensure optimal use of financial resources supported with real-time data, forecasting tools and responsive processes. Financial procedures are consistently applied, reviewed and aligned with strategic objectives, supporting continual improvement and educational quality.

Attainment Level	Description
5	The HEP demonstrates an integrated financial governance model that enables strategic investment, long-term sustainability and institutional agility. Resource allocation frameworks are adaptable, equitable and referenced by other institutions as models of transparent, needs-based financial stewardship that align fiscal responsibility with academic advancement.

Examples of Supporting Documents:

- Budget and procurement policy documents.
- Annual budget review reports.
- Financial delegation authority charts.
- Departmental resource planning forms.
- Evidence of outcomes-based budgeting reviews.
- Internal audit and risk management reports.

AREA 5: QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ENHANCEMENT

5.1 Internal Quality Assurance System

Standard 5.1.1
The HEP **must** have an independent department or equivalent unit dedicated to, and responsible for, the internal quality assurance system, led by a competent person with a direct line of reporting to the head of the institution or the governing board.

Standard 5.1.2
The HEP **must** establish policies and procedures for the regular review of its internal quality assurance system and processes to keep abreast of current developments in quality assurance and to maintain continual quality improvement within the institution.

Attainment Level Rubrics (Criterion 5.1)

Attainment Level	Description
1	The HEP fulfils **NONE** of the following: ● Has an independent department or equivalent unit dedicated to, and responsible for, the internal quality assurance system, led by a competent person with a direct line of reporting to the head of the institution or the governing board. ● Establishes policies and procedures for the regular review of its internal quality assurance system and processes to keep abreast of current developments in quality assurance and to maintain continual quality improvement within the institution.
2	The HEP fulfils **PARTIALLY** or **AT LEAST ONE** of the following: ● Has an independent department or equivalent unit dedicated to, and responsible for, the internal quality assurance system, led by a competent person with a direct line of reporting to the head of the institution or the governing board. ● Establishes policies and procedures for the regular review of its internal quality assurance system and processes to keep abreast of current developments in quality assurance and to maintain continual quality improvement within the institution.
3	The HEP has an independent department or equivalent unit dedicated to, and responsible for, the internal quality assurance system, led by a competent person with a direct line of reporting to the head of the institution or the governing board. The HEP establishes policies and procedures for the regular review of its internal quality assurance system and processes to keep abreast of current developments in quality assurance and to maintain continual quality improvement within the institution.

Attainment Level	Description
4	The HEP's internal quality assurance department is internally recognised as a prominent entity within the institution. The internal quality assurance system is well integrated across all institutional levels, supported by evidence-based review and effective stakeholder engagement. The internal quality assurance processes are systematically and periodically reviewed for effectiveness and contribute towards continual quality improvement within the institution.
5	The HEP demonstrates a well-coordinated, seamless internal quality assurance system that is digitally enabled, predictive, and externally validated and recognised/certified. Its quality assurance insights drive strategic decision-making and innovation, and these practices can be referred to as benchmarks.

Examples of Supporting Documents:

- Organisational chart showing the internal quality assurance system's independence.
- Manuals, standard operating procedures and review schedules of the internal quality assurance system.
- Records of quality assurance audits and review cycles.
- Reporting lines to the vice-chancellor or the governing board.
- Documentation of improvement actions resulting from quality assurance audits.

5.2 Mechanisms for Programme Monitoring, Review and Evaluation

(A) Policies and Procedures

Standard 5.2.1
The HEP **must** have policies and procedures for the periodical monitoring, review and evaluation of its programmes, covering needs assessments and benchmarking analyses, teaching and learning activities, student assessment, administration and related educational and support services.

Standard 5.2.2
The policies and procedures for the programme monitoring, review and evaluation **must** be regularly reviewed and updated.

Standard 5.2.3
The HEP **must** share responsibility with all collaborative partners in the programme management, monitoring, review and evaluation processes for programmes offered through collaborative arrangements. (*Note: Applicable only to programmes offered with collaborative partners.*)

Attainment Level Rubrics (Criterion 5.2A)

Attainment Level	Description
1	The HEP fulfils **NONE** of the following: ● Has policies and procedures for the periodical monitoring, review and evaluation of its programmes, covering needs assessments and benchmarking analyses, teaching and learning activities, student assessment, administration and related educational and support services. ● Has policies and procedures for the programme monitoring, review and evaluation regularly reviewed and updated. ● Shares responsibility with all its collaborative partners in the programme management, monitoring, review and evaluation processes for programmes offered through collaborative arrangements. (*Note: Applicable only to programmes offered with collaborative partners.*)
2	The HEP fulfils **PARTIALLY** or **AT LEAST ONE** of the following: ● Has policies and procedures for the periodical monitoring, review and evaluation of its programmes, covering needs assessments and benchmarking analyses, teaching and learning activities, student assessment, administration and related educational and support services. ● Has policies and procedures for the programme monitoring, review and evaluation regularly reviewed and updated. ● Shares responsibility with all its collaborative partners in the programme management, monitoring, review and evaluation processes for programmes offered through collaborative arrangements. (*Note: Applicable only to programmes offered with collaborative partners.*)
3	The HEP has policies and procedures for the periodical monitoring, review and evaluation of its programmes, covering needs assessments and benchmarking analyses, teaching and learning activities, student assessment, administration and related educational and support services. These policies and procedures are regularly reviewed and updated. The HEP shares responsibility with all its collaborative partners in the programme management, monitoring, review and evaluation processes for programmes offered through collaborative arrangements. (*Note: Applicable only to programmes offered with collaborative partners.*)

Attainment Level	Description
4	Programme monitoring and review are systematically implemented across all academic programmes, integrated with the HEP's internal quality assurance processes and linked to its educational goals and programme learning outcomes, market trends and strategic goals. Programme evaluation is carried out with effective external scrutiny that leads to improvements in students' attainment of the learning outcomes and incorporation of good practices in programme management.
5	The HEP demonstrates quality assurance processes with a dynamic and agile internal quality assurance system, supported by data analytics. The outcomes of the programme review and evaluation contribute to innovation, accreditation success and institutional reputation.

Examples of Supporting Documents:

- Approved review policy/manual.
- Programme review templates with benchmarks.
- Evidence of sharing quality assurance responsibilities with collaborative partners.
- Records of programme evaluation reports and action plans.
- Stakeholder and graduate feedback incorporated.
- Continual quality improvement records with impact analysis.

(B) Implementation of Programme Review and Evaluation

Standard 5.2.4
The implementation of programme review and evaluation **must** be timely and coordinated by designated committees.

Standard 5.2.5
Programme review and evaluation **must** be conducted to verify and validate the curriculum and its constructive alignment in order to ascertain the attainment of programme learning outcomes and the achievement of the HEP's educational goals.

Standard 5.2.6
Programme review and evaluation **must** include analyses of student progression and performance, covering passing, graduation, attrition and employment rates, for the purpose of continual quality improvement.

Standard 5.2.7
The results of the programme review and evaluation, including areas of concern, **must** be brought to the attention of the highest relevant authorities within the HEP.

Attainment Level Rubrics (Criterion 5.2B)

Attainment Level	Description
1	The HEP fulfils **NONE** of the following: ● The implementation of programme review and evaluation is timely and coordinated by designated committees. ● The programme review and evaluation are conducted to verify and validate the curriculum and its constructive alignment in order to ascertain the attainment of programme learning outcomes and the achievement of the HEP's educational goals. ● The programme review and evaluation include analyses of student progression and performance, covering passing, graduation, attrition and employment rates, for the purpose of continual quality improvement. ● The results of the programme review and evaluation, including areas of concern, are brought to the attention of the highest relevant authorities within the HEP.
2	The HEP fulfils **PARTIALLY** or **AT LEAST ONE** of the following: ● The implementation of programme review and evaluation is timely and coordinated by designated committees. ● The programme review and evaluation are conducted to verify and validate the curriculum and its constructive alignment in order to ascertain the attainment of programme learning outcomes and the achievement of the HEP's educational goals. ● The programme review and evaluation include analyses of student progression and performance, covering passing, graduation, attrition and employment rates, for the purpose of continual quality improvement. ● The results of the programme review and evaluation, including areas of concern, are brought to the attention of the highest relevant authorities within the HEP.
3	The implementation of programme review and evaluation is timely and coordinated by designated committees, and the review and evaluation are conducted to verify and validate the curriculum and its constructive alignment in order to ascertain the attainment of programme learning outcomes and the achievement of the HEP's educational goals. The programme review and evaluation include analyses of student progression and performance, covering passing, graduation, attrition and employment rates, for the purpose of continual quality improvement, and the results of the programme review and evaluation, including areas of concern, are brought to the attention of the highest relevant authorities within the HEP.

Attainment Level	Description
4	The HEP's programme monitoring, review and evaluation processes are fully integrated within the internal quality assurance system and support achievement of the institutional strategic objectives. The programme review and evaluation processes are evidence-based, involving data analytics on attainment of learning outcomes, market needs and graduate employability. The areas of concern, affirmations and other findings derived from the programme review and evaluation exercises are monitored to ensure the effectiveness of its implementation.
5	The HEP demonstrates leading practices in its programme review and evaluation, with processes that are predictive, benchmarked and supported by data analytics. The areas of concern, affirmations and other findings derived from the programme review and evaluation exercises influence resource allocation, strategic priorities and cross-institutional innovation and enhancement.

Examples of Supporting Documents:

- Minutes from programme review committees.
- Evidence of curriculum revalidation reports.
- Graduate employability analysis (e.g., Ministry of Higher Education Tracer Study).
- Reports submitted to the senate/academic board.
- Integrated continual quality improvement tracking system for programme review.
- Evidence of responsive curriculum reform.

5.3 Involvement of Stakeholders and Educational Experts

Standard 5.3.1
The implementation of the programme review and evaluation **must** involve relevant stakeholders, including alumni and employers, to maintain the currency and relevance of the HEP's programmes.

Standard 5.3.2
The programme review and evaluation **must** take into account feedback and recommendations from educational experts, including programme assessors, for the purpose of quality assurance and continual quality improvement.

Standard 5.3.3
The results of programme review and evaluation arising from stakeholder feedback **must** be systematically analysed and documented, with the resulting changes disseminated to stakeholders.

Attainment Level Rubrics (Criterion 5.3)

Attainment Level	Description
1	The HEP fulfils **NONE** of the following: ● The implementation of the programme review and evaluation involves relevant stakeholders, including alumni and employers, to maintain the currency and relevance of the HEP's programmes. ● The programme review and evaluation take into account feedback and recommendations from educational experts and programme assessors, for the purpose of quality assurance and continual quality improvement. ● The results of programme review and evaluation arising from stakeholder feedback are systematically analysed and documented, with the resulting changes disseminated to stakeholders.
2	The HEP fulfils **PARTIALLY** or **AT LEAST ONE** of the following: ● The implementation of the programme review and evaluation involves relevant stakeholders, including alumni and employers, to maintain the currency and relevance of the HEP's programmes. ● The programme review and evaluation take into account feedback and recommendations from educational experts and programme assessors, for the purpose of quality assurance and continual quality improvement. ● The results of programme review and evaluation arising from stakeholder feedback are systematically analysed and documented, with the resulting changes disseminated to stakeholders.
3	The implementation of the programme review and evaluation involves relevant stakeholders, including alumni and employers, to maintain the currency and relevance of the HEP's programmes. Programme review and evaluation also take into account feedback and recommendations from educational experts and programme assessors, for the purpose of quality assurance and continual quality improvement. The results of programme review and evaluation arising from stakeholder feedback are systematically analysed and documented, with the resulting changes disseminated to stakeholders.
4	Stakeholder engagement is embedded, and its feedback is triangulated at different stages in the programme review and evaluation, including verification, validation and consideration for decision-making. Processes of gathering feedback are structured, using diverse approaches and are impact driven, and translated into actions for quality enhancement.

Attainment Level	Description
5	The HEP demonstrates good practices in stakeholder engagement in programme review and evaluation, featuring continuous interaction with the stakeholders and external validation of the quality assurance actions, resulting in curricula that exceed stakeholders' expectations, leading to good graduate employability and/or significant societal impact.

Examples of Supporting Documents:

- Programme review reports including external input.
- Alumni/Employer consultation records.
- Communication logs (e.g., newsletters, meeting summaries).
- Documented response to the feedback matrix.

5.4 Quality Improvement and Enhancement

Standard 5.4.1
The HEP **must** promote a quality culture through participatory and cooperative processes across all levels to assure quality in education, research, service and management within the institution.

Standard 5.4.2
The HEP **must** have mechanisms to implement recommendations for quality improvement and enhancement plans, which **must** be linked with institutional goals and strategic objectives.

Attainment Level Rubrics (Criterion 5.4)

Attainment Level	Description
1	The HEP fulfils **NONE** of the following: ● Promotes a quality culture through participatory and cooperative processes across all levels to assure quality in education, research, service and management within the institution. ● Has mechanisms to implement recommendations for quality improvement and enhancement plans, which are linked with institutional goals and strategic objectives.
2	The HEP fulfils **PARTIALLY** or **AT LEAST ONE** of the following: ● Promotes a quality culture through participatory and cooperative processes across all levels to assure quality in education, research, service and management within the institution. ● Has mechanisms to implement recommendations for quality improvement and enhancement plans, which are linked with institutional goals and strategic objectives.

Attainment Level	Description
3	The HEP promotes a quality culture through participatory and cooperative processes across all levels to assure quality in education, research, service and management within the institution. The HEP also has mechanisms to implement recommendations for quality improvement and enhancement plans, which are linked with institutional goals and strategic objectives.
4	Quality culture is integrated in governance, academic processes and support services with effective management. Quality improvement and enhancement are driven by multi-source evidence, supported by performance monitoring systems and data analytics, and contribute to its strategic agenda.
5	The HEP demonstrates institutionalised quality culture, which may include whole-institution engagement, lean management, innovative enhancement models and evidence-based decision-making. The quality assurance practices are referred to as benchmarks.

Examples of Supporting Documents:

- Continual quality improvement policy or Quality Handbook.
- Staff/Student engagement in quality assurance activities.
- Enhancement plan linked to strategic key performance indicators.
- Documentation of action plans based on internal review.

SECTION 3

METHODOLOGY FOR RATINGS AND FINAL RECOMMENDATION

3.1 General Framework

The IQAF document contains **80 standards** which need to be fulfilled by a Higher Education Provider (HEP) undergoing an institutional quality audit. For the purpose of document preparation and evaluation, these standards are grouped into five areas of evaluation and subsequently into 30 criteria, with each area of evaluation containing about 5-7 criteria to be evaluated.

In general, each criterion shall be evaluated summatively or holistically. Each criterion shall be given an attainment level (AL) between AL 1 and AL 5, with AL 3 designated as the baseline attainment for fulfilment of the standards in the particular criterion as expected in the standard statements. The determination of the appropriate attainment level during an evaluation of a criterion should be based on incremental fulfilment. In this manner, a higher AL should only be considered after all the lower attainment levels have been fulfilled. Based on this principle, the criteria listed in Section 2 shall be determined accordingly.

In order to maintain consistency between the content of the report and the attainment level ratings given for all the criteria, the scores shall correspond to the levels of attainment classified in the form of the audit findings, namely commendations, affirmations and areas of concern, as reported in the Institutional Quality Audit Report. Therefore, a commendation should be reflected with an AL 5, which may be referred to as a benchmark, exemplary practice or commendable outcome. On the other hand, an AL 4 represents effective or efficient fulfilment of all the criteria, with an inadequate exemplary element to be recognised as a benchmark, and an AL 3 can be acknowledged as an affirmation. Likewise, an AL 1 or AL 2 would correspond to an area of concern due to non-fulfilment of any standards in a criterion. In doing so, the validity and reliability of the ratings can be maintained, and their consistency with the content of the report and the findings can be ensured.

3.2 Methodology for Computing Overall Attainment

The calculation of the overall attainment starts by assigning scores of 1 to 5 to all the criteria. Denoting the attainment level for the ith criterion for Area j as $AL_{i,j}$, the average attainment level of Area j, $\overline{\mathrm{AL}}_j$, can be calculated as follows:

$$\overline{\mathrm{AL}}_j = \frac{1}{m_j}\sum_{i=1}^{m_j} \mathrm{AL}_{i,j} \qquad \text{(i)}$$

where m_j is the total number of criteria in Area j; $j = \{1, 2, 3, 4, 5\}$ and $i = \{1, \ldots, m_j\}$.

To compute the overall attainment, $\overline{\overline{\mathrm{AL}}}$, the five values of the average attainment levels for all areas of evaluation calculated using Equation (i) can be averaged and normalised to 100% using the following formula:

$$\overline{\overline{\mathrm{AL}}}\,(\%) = \left(\frac{1}{5}\sum_{j=1}^{5}\overline{\mathrm{AL}}_j\right) \times 100\% \qquad \text{(ii)}$$

This formula is based on equal weightings for all areas. A customised weighting can be introduced for certain areas and criteria to suit a specific purpose of the audit. The number of standards and criteria for each Area j can be referred to in **Table 1**.

Table 1: List of areas of evaluation and number of standards and criteria in each area

Area of Evaluation	Number of Standards	Number of Criteria, m_j
Area 1: Institutional Governance and Sustainability	15	6
Area 2: Academic Development and Management	15	5
Area 3: Student Experience and Support	15	7
Area 4: Talent and Resources	21	7
Area 5: Quality Assurance and Enhancement	14	5
Total	**80**	**30**

The overall attainment computed using Equation (ii) can be used for the consideration of the final recommendation for the accreditation decision. Consideration for the final recommendation can also take into account the holistic evaluation of all areas, which is represented by a radar chart illustrated in **Figure 1**.

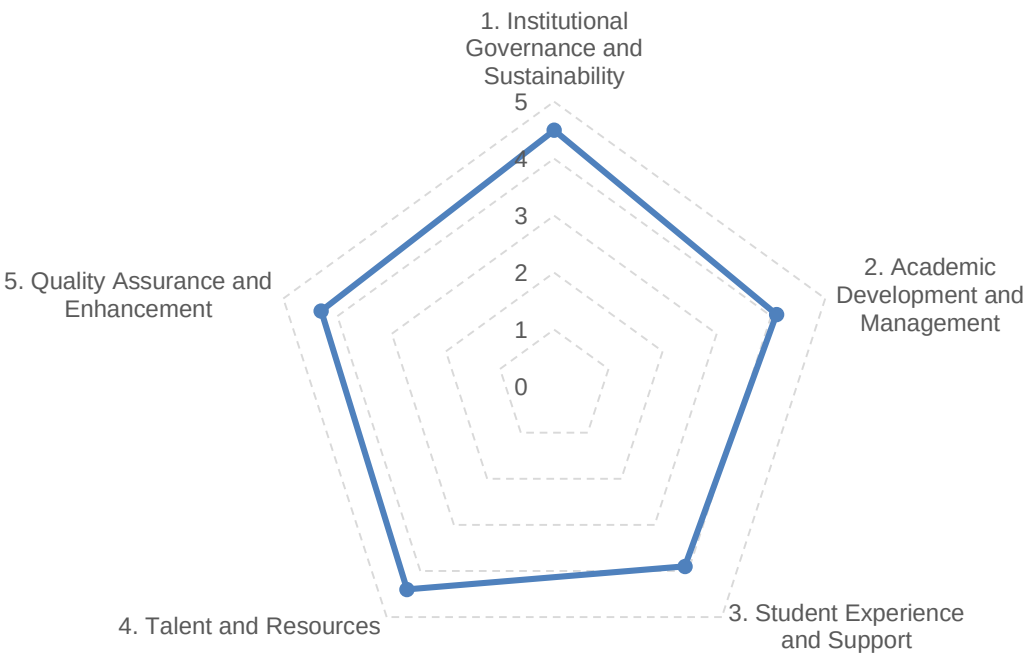

Figure 1: An example of a radar chart for the holistic evaluation of the HEP's achievement in all areas of evaluation in the Institutional Quality Audit

3.3 Considerations for the Final Recommendation

Based on the percentage of the overall attainment rating computed using Equation (ii), the final recommendation for the accreditation decision can be proposed by the panel of auditors.

For the consideration of Self-Accreditation Status, the final recommendation shall be one of the following:

a. Grant Self-Accreditation Status without condition;
b. Grant Self-Accreditation Status after conditions are fulfilled; or
c. Refuse to grant Self-Accreditation Status (with reasons).

For the consideration of the renewal of Self-Accreditation Status, the final recommendation shall be one of the following:

a. Maintain Self-Accreditation Status without condition;
b. Maintain Self-Accreditation Status after conditions are fulfilled; or
c. Revoke Self-Accreditation Status (with reasons).

The guiding principles leading to the final recommendation are summarised in **Table 2** and **Table 3**. For the consideration of Self-Accreditation Status, the decision of the Institutional Quality Audit is based on the attainment level for each criterion.

Table 2: Guiding principles for proposing the final recommendation for consideration of Self-Accreditation Status

Final Recommendation for Consideration of Self-Accreditation Status	Conditions for Fulfilment of Criteria	Condition for Overall Attainment $\overline{\overline{AL}}$
Grant Self-Accreditation Status without conditions	• **No criterion is lower than AL 4.** • No affirmation and no area of concern.	≥ 80%
Grant Self-Accreditation Status after conditions are fulfilled	• **No criterion is lower than AL 2.** • Area of concern and/or affirmation to be addressed as conditions.	≥ 70%
Refuse to grant Self-Accreditation Status (with reasons)	• **At least one criterion attains AL 1, and/or at least one area rating is below 3.** • Area of concern and/or affirmation to be stated as reasons to deny Self-Accreditation Status.	< 70%

Table 3: Guiding principles for proposing the final recommendation for Compliance Evaluation

Final Recommendation for Maintenance of Self-Accreditation Status	Conditions for Fulfilment of Criteria	Condition for Overall Attainment $\overline{\overline{AL}}$
Maintain Self-Accreditation Status without conditions	● **No criterion is lower than AL 4.** ● No affirmation and no area of concern.	≥ 80%
Maintain Self-Accreditation Status after conditions are fulfilled	● **No criterion is lower than AL 2.** ● Area of concern and/or affirmation to be addressed as conditions.	≥ 75%
Revoke Self-Accreditation Status (with reasons)	● **At least one criterion attains AL 1, and/or at least one area rating is below 3.** ● Area of concern and/or affirmation to be stated as reasons to revoke Self-Accreditation Status.	< 75%

LIST OF PANEL MEMBERS

NO.	PANEL MEMBER	ORGANISATION
1.	Prof. Ir. Dr. Shahrir Abdullah (Chairman)	Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM)
2.	Prof. Ts. Dr. Syamsul Nor Azlan Mohamad (Standard Writer)	Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM)
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