



National Commission for Academic Accreditation & Assessment

Handbook for Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Saudi Arabia

PART 1

THE SYSTEM FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ACCREDITATION

**THE SYSTEM FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE
AND
ACCREDITATION**

National Commission for Academic Accreditation & Assessment

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INTRODUCTION

The National Commission for Academic Accreditation & Assessment has been established in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia with responsibility for determining standards and criteria for academic accreditation and assessment and for accrediting postsecondary institutions and the programs they offer. The Commission is committed to a strategy of encouraging, supporting, and evaluating the quality assurance processes of postsecondary institutions to ensure that quality of learning and management of institutions are equivalent to the highest international standards. These high standards and levels of achievement must be widely recognized both within the Kingdom and elsewhere in the world.

This Handbook has been prepared to assist institutions in introducing and developing internal quality assurance processes and in preparing for the external peer reviews that the Commission will conduct to verify the achievement of high standards of performance.

Part 1 of the Handbook is intended to give a general overview of the system for quality assurance and accreditation. It describes the principles that underlie the approach taken by the Commission, summarizes standards that will be applied in quality assurance and accreditation judgments, and briefly outlines the stages involved in the approval of institutions and accreditation of programs. This part of the Handbook also includes an explanation of a number of terms used for the quality assurance and accreditation system in Saudi Arabia.

Part 2 of the handbook focuses on internal quality assurance processes. It provides advice on establishing an institution's quality center, processes of planning, evaluation and internal reporting on educational programs, and self study and improvement of institutional activities. Templates for use in preparing reports are included in appendices.

Part 3 of the Handbook provides details of what is required in preparation for and the conduct of external reviews. These processes relate to applications for approval and accreditation of a new institution, the accreditation and re-accreditation of programs, and institutions on a five year cycle.

Parts 1, 2 and 3 of the Handbook should be read in conjunction with two other key documents, a *National Qualifications Framework* setting out the learning expectations and credit requirements for levels of academic awards and two documents setting out standards for accreditation. The standards deal with eleven areas of activity in higher education institutions. The primary standards documents are *Standards for Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions* and *Standards for Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Higher Education Programs*. Both of these are accompanied by companion documents providing self-evaluation scales for assessment of performance in relation to the standards. Statements of standards for special situations are being progressively developed. These include programs offered by distance education, and standards for technical training for use with technical training programs in community colleges established by universities. Supplementary documents dealing with other special issues relevant to distance education and to programs in different special fields are in preparation. Separate statements of standards for technical training will also be provided. These documents explain the standards expected by the Commission and are intended to serve as important guides for continuing improvements in quality.

CHAPTER 1

PRINCIPLES AND PROCESSES

Summary of Arrangements

The National Commission for Academic Accreditation & Assessment has responsibility under its By-law for establishing standards and for accreditation of all postsecondary institutions and all postsecondary programs other than military education. Its responsibility relates to both institutions as a whole and to the individual programs they offer. Details of how these responsibilities will be carried out are provided in this Handbook.

The Commission is an independent authority reporting directly to the Higher Council of Education. Its role is separate from that of the Ministries and other government agencies to which institutions are administratively accountable and which may establish regulations and reporting requirements for the institutions for which they are responsible.

The Commission's responsibilities relate to quality issues, which include the resources available, processes followed, the quality of services provided and the quality of students' learning. The Commission has established required standards in eleven broad areas of activity, and has developed a national qualifications framework that specifies generic standards of learning outcomes for each level of qualifications. It expects institutions to establish internal quality assurance systems that ensure high levels of quality in all of these eleven areas.

These internal systems must include processes of strategic planning in relation to appropriately defined institutional mission statements, and short term and long term planning and reporting procedures based on evidence of quality of performance. Periodic comprehensive self-studies must be undertaken to assess performance and plan for improvement. These self-studies are followed by independent external peer reviews that verify the conclusions of the self-studies and consider performance in relation to international standards. The Commission considers the reports from these independent external reviews in making its decisions on accreditation.

Existing institutions are expected to introduce quality assurance systems as soon as possible during a transition period lasting several years and will be assessed for accreditation progressively during that period. New institutions are expected to develop plans for their quality assurance systems before they receive their license to operate.

For new institutions, plans for establishing the institution and planning and delivering its programs should be reviewed to check that if properly implemented they will meet the Commission's quality requirements and any additional requirements established by the Ministry to which the proposed institution will be responsible.

If the Commission believes the plans are satisfactory it will give provisional accreditation for the institution to offer programs in certain fields up to specified levels, and will give provisional accreditation for programs for which details have been provided. At a later stage the Commission will conduct a further review to determine whether the plans have been properly implemented. If accreditation requirements are met at that later stage, the "provisional" designation will be removed and the institution, or the programs concerned, will be fully accredited.

Existing institutions and new institutions after they have achieved full approval and accreditation will be reviewed once every five years. Programs will also be re-accredited on a five yearly basis.

1.1 Principles Underlying the System for Accreditation and Quality Assurance

1.1.1 Responsibility for quality rests with institutions delivering programs.

The institutions delivering programs in Saudi Arabia are responsible for the quality of those programs and for the quality of all of their facilities and activities. An “institution” is the legal entity established in Saudi Arabia with authority to grant academic awards.

The principle of institutional responsibility has a number of important implications.

First, while an external organization such as the Commission can have an important role in assisting institutions in planning and introducing strategies for improvement and in evaluating and publicly reporting on what is achieved, this does not remove responsibility from the institution. An external authority can help, but it cannot deliver quality.

Second, although an institution may decentralize some of its responsibilities or delegate authority to an internal unit such as a college or department, this does not remove responsibility from the institution as a whole. Reviews of quality by the Commission for institutional accreditation will address the total institution and reviews of programs for program accreditation will address everything that affects the quality of the program.

Third, if an institution in Saudi Arabia delivers a program that has been developed elsewhere, it is still the institution in Saudi Arabia that must accept responsibility and will be accountable for the quality of the programs it offers. This is the case even where an academic or technical qualification may be issued by a partner institution in another country. An international institution wishing to operate in Saudi Arabia must establish a legal entity within the country, must meet the quality requirements for an institution of its type in Saudi Arabia regardless of any accreditation or quality requirements in its own country, and must provide sufficient resources and facilities within Saudi Arabia to satisfy quality standards.

1.1.2 Quality relates to all of an institution’s functions and activities.

Quality assurance processes in institutions should involve not only the educational programs, but also other matters such as the facilities and equipment, staffing, relationships with the communities served by the institution and the administrative processes that link all these together. This means that a quality assurance system should involve individuals and academic and organizational units throughout an institution, not only those directly involved in the delivery of educational programs.

Within each of these internal units consideration should be given to their inputs, processes, and outcomes, with an emphasis on the quality of the outcomes of the services they provide. In the past considerations of quality were largely based on inputs such as the qualifications of faculty, provision of equipment and facilities and adequacy of resources. However, while these are still important the emphasis has shifted. The most important consideration is the quality of outcomes, although inputs and the processes used are still significant and standards relating to them must be maintained.

1.1.3 Emphasis should be on support for continuing quality improvement rather than on satisfying required standards.

The primary objective of the system for accreditation and quality assurance is continuing improvement and this orientation will permeate all of the Commission’s activities. The system is based on a fundamental assumption that institutions wish to operate with high and increasing levels of quality, comparable to, and wherever possible exceeding international standards. The most important function of the Commission is to assist institutions in achieving those improvements.

An important consideration in accreditation judgments will be the existence and effective use of quality improvement mechanisms. Institutions will be encouraged to work towards continuing improvement beyond minimum requirements in all of their activities.

However the Commission does have a statutory obligation to ensure that necessary standards are achieved. Provided this is done, accreditation will be granted, but if inadequate standards are found this must be recognized and the need for improvement made known. Accreditation can only be granted when required standards are met.

1.1.4 Supportive relationships are essential.

Relationships of trust and support are essential within institutions and between institutions and the Commission and the reviewers with whom it works. No institution or program is perfect, and there is always scope for improvement. Willingness to acknowledge weaknesses and mistakes and work to deal with them is considered strength, not a weakness. It must be possible for individuals, for groups within institutions, and for institutions as a whole, to frankly acknowledge difficulties and discuss plans for overcoming them without fear of damage to reputation. On the other hand attempting to conceal problems is a serious weakness that will be open to criticism.

This means that the style of interaction within an institution that is effectively working for quality improvement, and between the Commission and the institution during external reviews should be characterized by cooperation, openness and transparency, sensitivity to mission and objectives and constructive support in identifying and resolving difficulties.

1.1.5 Assessments of quality must be evidence based and independently verified.

Conclusions about quality should be based as near as possible on directly observable evidence rather than subjective judgements. Indicators of achievement should be identified in advance, related to valid benchmarks to establish appropriate standards of performance, and systematically reviewed. Where interpretations are required, for example where indicators provide indirect evidence of achievement of objectives, interpretations should be independently verified.

1.1.6 Diversity should be encouraged.

Flexibility in organizational arrangements is necessary to meet the needs of different communities, to respond to differing missions and to reflect the differing circumstances and resources of different institutions. Allowing diversity is also essential if creativity and innovation are to be encouraged and improvements are to develop over time. Specific requirements for meeting quality standards may vary for different types of institution. For example, research may be an important element in the work of some institutions and not for others, and the way an institution interacts with its community should differ for a large public university and a small college in a remote community.

However, while there are important differences in expectations for some standards, the quality of learning expected for academic awards does not vary. If community confidence in the system of postsecondary education is to be maintained it must be possible to rely on consistent standards of student achievement no matter what kind of institution students attend or how their programs are organized.

1.1.7 Stakeholders should have substantial involvement in planning and review processes with feedback regularly obtained, analyzed, and responded to.

Stakeholders include students and graduates, staff, employers, providers of funds, members of the communities served by the institution and any other groups with which the institution is involved. The stakeholders have a right to be involved, but even more importantly, have perspectives that need to be considered if a system for quality assurance is to be effective.

1.1.8 Total institutional commitment to quality improvement should be achieved through effective leadership and widespread involvement.

A good educational institution should be a learning organization, in which all faculty and staff are involved in evaluating their performance and that of the units within which they work, and offer ideas and plan for improvement following that evaluation. There must be effective leadership and coordination at the level of the institution as a whole, but this leadership and coordination must be combined with wide participation in evaluation, planning, and reporting. While effective leadership is essential at the most senior levels of the institution, it is equally important in internal academic and administrative units.

1.2 Internal Quality Assurance Processes

All postsecondary institutions are expected to have comprehensive and effective quality assurance systems.

For a new institution a quality assurance system should be an integral part of the plans for its development. Plans for the quality system should deal with monitoring and improving the quality and effectiveness of all programs to be offered and also of the academic and administrative units and functions within it. The role and processes to be followed by a quality unit or center should be described.

For an existing institution processes of quality assurance should be fully integrated in all parts of the organization. More detailed descriptions of these expectations are set out in the Part 2 of this Handbook, which deals with internal quality assurance processes and in the *Standards for Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions*. In summary, the expectations include leadership and coordination of quality assessment and improvement processes based on the mission and goals of the institution; preparation of detailed planning and reporting procedures; and implementation of those procedures in a continuing cycle of annual planning, monitoring and review. More comprehensive self-studies should be conducted periodically. These serve as a vital review and planning mechanism for the institution itself and also as the basis for independent external reviews by the Commission.

For an existing institution that does not yet have such a system, arrangements for internal quality assurance would normally start with the establishment of a quality center, appointment of key staff to that center and appointment of a quality committee drawn from all sections of the institution. This center would involve people across the institution in an initial self evaluation, which would provide a starting point for plans for improvement where necessary and the introduction of required quality assurance processes.

Part of the institution's responsibility for its own quality assurance involves assessing itself against appropriate standards using external benchmarks or reference points. These may be descriptions of standards provided by the Commission, benchmarks relating to the performance of other comparable institutions within Saudi Arabia or elsewhere, or the opinions of independent evaluators with relevant experience in postsecondary education. In some cases institutions may use the judgments made by international accrediting bodies for this purpose. Although these evaluations may be made by people external to the institution, from the Commission's point of view, they are part of the institution's own arrangements for quality assurance, and for the purposes of the system of accreditation and quality assurance in Saudi Arabia, are regarded as internal mechanisms.

1.3 External Quality Assurance Processes

The Commission has established a system for external quality assurance involving accreditation of institutions and programs if they meet required quality standards. To carry out these evaluations the Commission will use trained and experienced reviewers. They will study documentary information, visit institutions, and provide recommendations to the Commission. A summary of the processes followed is given below, and the stages are described in greater detail in Chapter 3 of this Handbook. Part 3 of the Handbook deals specifically with external review processes and the preparations that are needed for those reviews.

For new institutions, assessments by the Commission will occur at two stages. First, when a proposal to establish a new institution is being considered or when it has just started, the Commission will consider its current activities and review the plans for further development. This review is designed to ensure that if the plans are properly implemented the institution and its quality assurance systems will likely **satisfy** the required standards and that programs will meet accreditation requirements. At that stage the institution and its programs will receive

provisional accreditation. If the plans also meet the standards established by the relevant Ministry a license will be given to allow it to begin operating. The second stage occurs after the institution is established and the first group of students have completed their programs. The Commission will carry out a further assessment to ensure that plans were properly and fully implemented and that standards are being met. Full institutional and program accreditation may then be given.

After full accreditation, programs will need to be re-accredited every five years. External reviews of the institution will also be conducted on a five-yearly basis. (While a five year cycle will be the norm, the Commission may at its discretion require an external review at an earlier time).

The reviews of institutions and of programs are closely related. Institutional reviews will deal with all of an institution's activities, including an overview of the quality of its programs and the facilities and services to support them. Reviews of programs will deal in greater detail with individual programs and the standards of teaching and learning achieved.

To ensure that these different types of reviews are effectively coordinated and do not result in unnecessary additional work for institutions, several steps will be taken. First, while the focus of program reviews will be on individual programs, arrangements may be made for considering groups of closely related programs at the same time. Second, wherever possible the timing of external program and institutional reviews will be coordinated. In small institutions with only a small number of programs, the reviews may be combined so that work on preparation of material need be done only once rather than duplicated. Alternatively, for a large institution with many different programs, the reviews may be spaced apart to minimize the amount of work required at any particular time. These arrangements will be discussed with institutions at the time when reviews are scheduled. The reports on reviews that have been undertaken will be made available to the members of later review panels so that they are aware of comments and recommendations that have been made.

1.4 Stages in Accreditation for New Institutions

These notes apply to an institution responsible to the Ministry of Higher Education. For any institution that must be approved by, or is responsible to a different government agency, details of requirements must be obtained from the ministry or agency concerned. The following notes are a summary of the stages involved. Further details are provided in Chapter 1 of Part 3 of this Handbook.

1.4.1 Stages in Accreditation for New Private Higher Education Institutions (See Special Note Below)

- The proposers of the institution apply to the Ministry of Higher Education for an Initial Licence.
- The proposers of the institution provide details of their proposal to the Ministry of Higher Education which assesses the plans in relation to the Ministry's regulations, and to the NCAAA which assesses the plans in relation to its quality assurance requirements. The plans include a Stage 1 plan showing what will be done in preparations before the first students are admitted, and the proposal to the NCAAA should include details of programs to be offered within the first three years. If the plans are acceptable the Ministry will indicate its approval and the NCAAA will give provisional accreditation. The proposers can then proceed with the Stage 1 preparations.
- When the stage 1 preparations have been completed, this will be checked and a final licence will be issued by the Minister enabling the institution to admit students and commence operations.
- Annual reports will be required to the Ministry and the NCAAA indicating progress in implementing the plans, and in the second year the NCAAA will conduct a site inspection before confirming the provisional accreditation.
- When the first group of students have completed their programs (normally in the fifth year) the institution will be required to complete a self study and will be reviewed by the NCAAA for full accreditation of the institution and of the initial programs.
- When full accreditation has been granted, there will be further reviews for reaccreditation of the institution and its programs every five years.

A proposal to establish a new private university must include plans to meet the special requirements of a university. The institution should start as a college, and if plans are approved, given the opportunity to move to university status as the requirements for a university are met.

Special Note:

During the transition stage in the implementation of the system for quality assurance and accreditation special arrangements have been made between the Ministry of Higher Education and the National Commission for Academic Accreditation & Assessment for initial licensing and assessments for scholarship eligibility for students in private universities and colleges.

Under these transitional arrangements the MHE will evaluate proposals to establish private institutions considering both MHE requirements and NCAAA standards for accreditation. If approval is given the NCAAA will evaluate the institution and its programs in relation to quality requirements during its first and later years and recommend eligibility if its standards are met. The institution and its programs must be assessed for accreditation after the first group of students has graduated. Further details of these arrangements are described in Chapter 1 of Part 3 of this Handbook.

1.4.2 Approval and Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions Based in Other Countries Wishing to Operate in Saudi Arabia.

An international higher education institution wishing to operate in Saudi Arabia should follow the same steps as a private college described above. The institution would have to be established as a legal entity (e.g. a company) in Saudi Arabia (which should be done as part of the Stage 1 preparations noted above). Services and support systems provided by the “home” institution would be taken into account in judgments made by the Ministry and the NCAAA, but all requirements for a private institution in Saudi Arabia must be met.

If an international institution wishes to offer a program through a franchising agreement (or comparable process) with a Saudi Arabian institution, the Saudi Arabian institution must have a final licence whose scope of activities includes that program. The program must meet Saudi Arabian requirements for accreditation, and it must have been given provisional accreditation before it can be offered.

1.4.3 Accreditation of New Public Universities

(a) New universities established from the beginning

An initial license is not applicable because the Government has made a decision to establish the university. However planning and establishment of the new university should follow a parallel process to that for a new private college.

- Plans should be prepared for the institution that meet the requirements of the Ministry of Higher Education and the Higher Council of Education and these plans should be checked by the Ministry. The plans for the quality assurance arrangements in the institution and the programs to be offered within the first three years should be submitted to the NCAAA. If the plans meet the NCAAA requirements and the initial activities are considered satisfactory they will be approved by the Ministry and the NCAAA will give provisional accreditation for the institution and the programs to be offered in the first three years.
- When the Stage 1 preparations have been completed the institution will be authorized by the Minister to admit students and start operating.
- If plans are being implemented as proposed, the NCAAA will conduct a site visit in the second year and confirm the provisional accreditation.
- When the first group of students have graduated, the institution will conduct self studies and the NCAAA will carry out an assessment for full accreditation of the institution and the initial programs.
- When full accreditation has been granted, there will be further reviews for re-accreditation of the institution and its programs every five years.

(b) New university formed from existing public colleges or campuses

- The Committee responsible for planning for the establishment of the new university should prepare plans that meet the requirements of the Ministry of Higher Education and the Higher Council of Education and these plans should be checked by the Ministry. The Committee should conduct an initial self evaluation of programs and activities on the existing campus (es) and prepare plans for quality assurance for the new institution. These plans should meet the requirements of the NCAAA for a quality assurance system, and should also deal with any deficiencies found in the initial self evaluation. The NCAAA will assess those plans and if judged to be satisfactory will grant provisional accreditation. This should be done before the new institution begins to operate as a university under its own name.
- The NCAAA will conduct a site visit in the second year and if the plans are being implemented as proposed confirm the provisional accreditation.
- When the first group of students have graduated, the institution will conduct self studies and the NCAAA will carry out an assessment for full accreditation of the institution and the initial programs.
- When full accreditation has been granted, there will be further reviews for re-accreditation of the institution and its programs every five years.

1.4.4 Accreditation of Existing Public Universities and Private Universities and Colleges

The NCAAA will consult with institutions and prepare a schedule for reviews for full accreditation. Reviews will normally be carried out for institutional accreditation as a first step, and followed with reviews for accreditation of programs at a later time, however in a small institution the two forms of accreditation may be carried out concurrently.

Reviews for accreditation will not be carried out before the first group of students have graduated from the institution or the program concerned.

When full accreditation has been granted, there will be further reviews for re-accreditation of the institution and its programs every five years.

1.5 Consistent Use of Titles for Awards and Types of Institutions

Postsecondary education programs are provided by many different types of institutions, some designed for different types of programs such as technical training or higher education, some involved in research and the delivery of postgraduate professional and research programs and some concentrating on excellence in teaching and support for students at the undergraduate level. In many countries there are also some specialized professional institutes offering high quality postgraduate professional education in specific fields for experienced practitioners in those professions, or in general areas of required expertise such as business administration.

There is potential for confusion and undermining of public confidence if titles of programs or names for categories of institutions are ambiguous or are used inconsistently. Consequently, the Commission will require conformity with standard terminology in accrediting programs and institutions.

The titles and expectations for learning outcomes for programs are specified in the *National Qualifications Framework*. Where the same or similar titles are used for programs in technical training and higher education, as in the case of diplomas and, one of the terms “technology”, “technological”, “of technology”, or “technical” should be used in the title for the technical qualification.

The levels of programs offered by institutions are as follows:

In Vocational and Technical Training

Vocational and Technical Institutes—Vocational and technical training including short courses and courses of up to 3 years and up to level three in the *National Qualifications Framework*. Completion of these three year studies is regarded as equivalent to the completion of secondary education.

Colleges or Institutes of Technology (for male students) and **Higher Technical Institutes** (for female students) —Programs normally up to two years in length following completion of secondary education or equivalent, leading to a technical diploma at level 5 of the Vocational and Technical Training strand in the *National Qualifications Framework*. In one college of technology an additional program is offered for trainers in the vocational and technical training system at level 6 of the *National Qualifications Framework* leading to the degree of Bachelor of Technology Education.

Private Training Centers and Institutes

Technical training is also offered in a variety of short courses and other training programs by private training centers and institutes up to level 4 of vocational and technical training strand in the *National Qualifications Framework*.

Programs up to level 3 of the vocational education strand of the *National Qualifications Framework* are not considered postsecondary, and those programs and the institutions that operate only at those levels will not be approved or accredited by the Commission. However, programs at levels 4, 5 and 6 are regarded as postsecondary, and they and the colleges of technology or private training institutes offering them will require accreditation by the Technical and Vocational Training Corporation (TVTC).

In Higher Education

Community Colleges--Community Colleges are normally associated with public universities. Programs are offered up to the level of two year diplomas or associate degrees. Programs may be either higher education or technical in nature and must be clearly designated as such. Higher education programs are accredited by the Commission on the basis of its higher education standards and program requirements. Technical programs may be accredited by the Commission on the basis of its standards for technical programs. Preparatory or foundation courses which they sometimes offer are not considered postsecondary and do not carry credit towards a higher education award. However, the university is required to have effective systems for overseeing the quality of the programs offered.

Higher Education Colleges--Programs are normally offered up to level 3 of the higher education strand of the *National Qualifications Framework*, leading to a bachelor degree. Research activities by the colleges and staff who teach in them are encouraged but not required. However, teaching staff are expected to be involved in scholarly activities that ensure they remain up to date with emerging developments in their field of teaching and with associated pedagogy. In certain cases professional programs may be offered up to the level of masters degrees, subject to conditions relating to faculty expertise, resources and facilities.

University Colleges -- University colleges have a strong commitment to undergraduate teaching but also some of the requirements for a university, particularly involvement in research and high quality postgraduate programs at master's level (level 7 in the higher education strand of the *National Qualifications Framework*). The level of resources and research infrastructure must be adequate to support research by teaching staff and students in all the fields in which programs are offered. Postgraduate programs at master's degree level may relate primarily to professional fields.

Professional Institutes--Professional Institutes are sometimes established by professional societies or other international organizations and offer professional programs up to the level of a master's degree such as an

MBA, normally in a single field of study. Programs must meet all the accreditation requirements for the type of program concerned. The programs may be designed primarily for experienced members of the profession wishing to upgrade their qualifications through full time or part time study.

Universities--Programs may be offered up to the level of doctorates including research and professional degree programs. There are minimum requirements for breadth of study, research activity and provision of resources in support of postgraduate teaching and research that are set out in Chapter 2 of Part 1 in this Handbook and the *Standards for Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions*.

1.6 Transition to the System for Accreditation and Quality Assurance

The Commission wishes to move as rapidly as possible to implement the new system for accreditation and quality assurance. Information about standards and procedures will be made generally available and all institutions will be encouraged to introduce internal quality assurance processes as soon as possible. To assist them as they do so, opportunities will be provided for training and advice, and reference documents will be made available.

1.7 Misrepresentations of the Status of an Institution or of Approvals or Accreditation

Community confidence in the system of postsecondary education and training requires accurate and honest representation about institutions and programs and their accreditation status. Any misrepresentation by or on behalf of an institution will be regarded as a serious offence.

Examples include advertising or referring to a program or an institution as fully accredited when it has been provisionally accredited, using the term university in the title of an institution when it has been licensed as a college or an institute, claiming or implying that a program is accredited by the Commission when this is not the case, or wrongly claiming that a program offering is within the scope of an institution's license. Misrepresentations such as these will lead to cancellation by the Commission of accreditation of the program concerned and of the institution, as well as incurring severe penalties from the responsible Ministry.

It is possible that an institution or a program may be accredited by an international organization outside Saudi Arabia, but not by the Commission in Saudi Arabia. This could occur for a variety of reasons including that the program (or institution) is of good quality but has not yet been considered by the Commission for accreditation, or that different standards have been applied and the institution or program would not meet the Commission's standards. To protect the community from possible misrepresentation about the quality of an institution or program, reference to that accreditation can only be made in descriptive information or promotional literature if two conditions are met. (i) Any reference to accreditation by another agency must clearly indicate the organization from which accreditation has been obtained. It must not say simply that it is or has been accredited which could imply that accreditation has been granted by the official accrediting agency in Saudi Arabia (the NCAAA) and (ii) The accrediting agency is one that is officially recognized by the government in the country where it is established and is endorsed by the Commission.

CHAPTER 2

STANDARDS FOR ACCREDITATION AND QUALITY ASSURANCE

2.1 Standards for Institutions and Standards for Programs

The standards to be applied in judgments about accreditation are based on what are generally considered good practices in postsecondary institutions. These “good practices” must be explained so that institutions can refer to them in their internal quality processes and external reviewers can use them as criteria in their evaluations. The practices are summarized in eleven broad statements of standards and described in two documents, *Standards for Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education Institutions*, and *Standards for Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Higher Education Programs*. The standards are also used with two companion documents prepared to help institutions and those responsible for the delivery of programs to evaluate their performance in relation to the standards. These are the *Self Evaluation Scales for Higher Education Institutions*, and the *Self Evaluation Scales for Higher Education Programs*.

The eleven broad standards apply to both institutions and programs though there are differences in how they are applied for these different kinds of evaluation. The standards are presented in five groups:

- a) **Institutional Context**
 - 1) Mission and Objectives
 - 2) Governance and Administration
 - 3) Management of Quality Assurance and Improvement

- b) **Quality of Learning and Teaching**
 - 4) Learning and Teaching

- c) **Support for Student Learning**
 - 5) Student Administration and Support Services
 - 6) Learning Resources

- d) **Supporting Infrastructure**
 - 7) Facilities and Equipment
 - 8) Financial Planning and Management
 - 9) Employment Processes

- e) **Community Contributions**
 - 10) Research
 - 11) Institutional Relationships with the Community

In evaluations for institutional accreditation, performance in relation to all of these areas is considered for the institution as a whole including an overview of programs across the institution. For a program evaluation each standard is considered from the perspective of the particular program under review.

Some activities of an institution affect individual programs in only a very indirect way; for example, the quality of processes followed by a university council. These are not included in a program evaluation. However some activities administered centrally in an institution do have a major impact on programs: for example, the appointment of staff, or the effectiveness of a central library. These are considered in a program evaluation as they affect the particular program being evaluated, even though they are not controlled by the program’s managers.

The standards are applicable to all institutions, large and small, public and private. However, the way tasks are carried out will vary widely, reflecting the size, complexity, and resources available to an institution, the environment in which it is operating, and the priorities established in its mission.

The Commission has not established weightings for the different areas of activity in making evaluations since the relative importance can vary for different kinds of institutions and the circumstances in which they operate. For example, a university with a major commitment to research would be expected to give significant emphasis to research and strategies to develop research capacity. However, a college with undergraduate programs would be expected to have limited involvement in research or perhaps none at all, though its teaching staff would be expected to engage in scholarly activities that keep them up to date with developments in their field.

Despite these variations it is expected that the standard for learning and teaching, with particular emphasis on learning outcomes, will always be regarded as of primary importance.

Programs must lead to standards of student achievement that are consistent with the requirements of the *National Qualifications Framework*, a document that describes in general terms the increasing levels of knowledge and skills required for higher qualifications.

The main elements in the *Framework* are:

Levels- Levels numbered and linked to qualification titles to describe the increasing intellectual demand and complexity of learning expected as students progress to higher academic awards.

- **Credits** - Points allocated to describe the amount of work or volume of learning expected for an academic award or units or other components of a program.
- **Domains of Learning**-The broad categories of types of learning outcomes that a program is intended to develop.

The qualification titles and levels are consistent with current practice in the Kingdom ranging from a diploma/associate degree after a minimum of 60 credit hours (two years of postsecondary study) to a doctorate. Normal full time load for a student is 15 credit hours in one semester but up to 18 may be acceptable.

The domains of learning describe broad categories of learning outcomes in four broad areas with a fifth, psychomotor skills, added in particular fields of study where this kind of learning is important. The domains are:

- **knowledge**, the ability to recall, understand, and present information, including:
 - knowledge of specific facts,
 - knowledge of concepts, principles and theories, and
 - knowledge of procedures.
- **cognitive skills**, the ability to:
 - apply conceptual understanding of concepts, principles, theories and
 - apply procedures involved in critical thinking and creative problem solving, both when asked to do so, and when faced with unanticipated new situations.
- **interpersonal skills and responsibility**, including the ability to:
 - take responsibility for their own learning and continuing personal and professional development,
 - work effectively in groups and exercise leadership when appropriate,
 - act responsibly in personal and professional relationships,
 - act ethically and consistently with high moral standards in personal and public forums.
- **communication, information technology and numerical skills**, including the ability to:
 - communicate effectively in oral and written form,
 - use information and communications technology, and
 - use basic mathematical and statistical techniques.
- **Psychomotor skills** involving manual dexterity that are extremely important in some fields of study. For example, very high levels of psychomotor skills are required for a surgeon, an artist, or a musician.

The *National Qualifications Framework* includes broad general descriptions of the level of mastery expected in each of these domains for each qualifications level.

The standard for learning and teaching requires that students learn the knowledge and skills expected in academic disciplines or required for professional practice in fields for which they are being prepared. To meet this requirement institutions, should consider in their planning the requirements of any relevant professional body or specialist accreditor in the field, as well as any special requirements relating to circumstances in Saudi Arabia.

Judgments about quality should involve comparisons with past performance (to assess improvement) or with other institutions to make judgments about quality and relative levels of performance. The objective of the system in Saudi Arabia is that quality will be at least equivalent to that found in good quality international institutions. This will require international comparisons on at least some important matters. However, points of comparison to establish benchmarks of performance must be appropriate for the institution concerned and its mission and circumstances.

Part 2 of this Handbook includes details of what should be included in a number of planning documents and reports. In attachments to that Handbook, templates have been provided to assist those responsible for the preparation of these documents. These templates are designed to provide descriptions of plans and reports on activities, with summaries of evidence about performance in relation to the standards.

In the vocational and technical training strand of the *National Qualifications Framework*, six domains of learning have been identified. These differ to some extent from the domains in higher education, reflecting the different orientation of programs in that sector including the key requirement to develop a number of specific skills required for employment. As for higher education, achieving the required standards of learning in these domains is extremely important and this will require use of teaching strategies appropriate for the type of learning involved. Considerations for program accreditation will include careful consideration of the teaching strategies used to achieve those outcomes, the ways that learning is assessed, the processes for verifying the quality of learning outcomes and the extent to which employment requirements are met.

The ultimate objective of any program is that what is learned will be used effectively after graduation. This cannot be properly fully determined through student assessments while students are still enrolled. Because of this, the evaluation of programs is expected to include at least some evidence that what is learned is applied appropriately in personal and professional lives after graduation. This will call for evidence based on surveys or other mechanisms to assess whether the required long term learning outcomes have been achieved.

2.2 Using Evidence for Evaluations of Quality

Judgments about quality should be based on evidence rather than relying on reputations or general impressions. Evidence can be anything that informs a decision. In developing a system of quality assurance it is possible to plan in advance for the kind of evidence that will be provided.

While a variety of forms of evidence can be used, it is necessary to decide on at least some specific performance indicators. For example, a form of evidence about the quality of teaching might be the opinions of students. A performance indicator based on student opinions would need to be quantified in some standard form such as the average rating of quality of teaching on a standard scale by students in a class. Other indicators might be the completion and passing rates of students in courses (after independent verification of the standards required), or ratings of the value of a course or program in a survey of graduates.

Performance indicators will also be used by external reviewers in an external review. However, when making judgments about quality other information may come to notice, and this should also be taken into account. Part of the role of an external reviewer is to verify the conclusions made by an institution and this often involves consideration of evidence that goes beyond the performance indicators that have been selected by the institution.

In addition to the indicators that an institution selects for its own evaluations and reports, which should reflect its own mission, priorities and organizational arrangements, the Commission will from time to time identify a limited number of key performance indicators (KPIs) that should be used in all institutions or in particular groups of institutions. Data on those KPIs will be required in the self-study reports considered in external reviews....

2.3 Summary of Standards, Forms of Evidence, and Possible Indicators

A summary of the eleven general standards, some comments on kinds of evidence that could be considered and possible performance indicators based on this evidence is provided below. The comments on evidence and indicators presented here are intended to be illustrative. Part of the quality planning for an institution or a program is to identify evidence and indicators that will be used for that institution or program for quality assurance purposes.

It should also be noted that in these examples, the standards for an institution offering face-to-face or on-campus instruction have been used. For an institution offering distance education programs some different forms of evidence and indicators would be required.

A. Institutional Context

Standard 1: Mission Goals and Objectives

Standard 1: Mission Goals and Objectives

Institutional Standard	Program Standard
The institution's mission statement must clearly and appropriately define its principal purposes and priorities, and be influential in guiding planning and action within the institution.	The mission of the program must be consistent with that for the institution and apply that mission to the particular goals and requirements of the program concerned. It must clearly and appropriately define the program's principal purposes and priorities and be influential in guiding planning and action.
Specific requirements for an institution relating to Standard 1 are specified under the headings of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1 Appropriateness of the Mission 1.2 Usefulness of the Mission Statement 1.3 Development and Review of the Mission 1.4 Use Made of the Mission 1.5 Relationship Between Mission, Goals and Objectives 	Specific requirements for a particular program relating to Standard 1 are specified under the headings of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1 Appropriateness of the Mission 1.2 Usefulness of the Mission Statement 1.3 Development and Review of the Mission 1.4 Use Made of the Mission 1.5 Relationship Between Mission, Goals and Objectives

Evidence and Performance Indicators

Evidence about the quality of the mission could be obtained from examination of the mission statement itself, copies of papers proposing the mission or modifications to it, interviews with staff and students to find out how well it is known and supported, and consideration of other reports, proposals and statements to determine the extent to which the mission is used as a basis for decisions. Indicators that could be used include responses to questions on surveys to determine how well the mission is known and supported, or the proportion of policy decisions that refer to the mission among criteria for decision-making.

Standard 2: Governance and Administration

Standard 2 Program Administration

Institutional Standard	Program Standard
The governing body must provide effective leadership in the interests of the institution as a whole and its clients, through policy development and processes for accountability. Senior administrators must lead the activities of the institution effectively within a clearly defined governance structure. Their activities must be consistent with high standards of integrity and ethical practice. If there are separate sections for male and female student's resources must be comparable in both sections, there must be effective communication between them, and full	Program administration must reflect an appropriate balance between accountability to senior management and the governing board of the institution, and flexibility to meet the specific requirements of the program concerned. Planning processes must involve stakeholders (e.g. students, professional bodies, industry representatives, teaching staff) in establishing goals and objectives and reviewing and responding to results achieved. If a program is offered in sections for male and female students resources for the program must be comparable in both sections and there must be

involvement in planning and decision making processes. Planning and management must occur within a framework of sound policies and regulations that ensure financial and administrative accountability and provide an appropriate balance between coordinated planning and local initiative.	effective communication between them and equitable involvement in planning processes. The quality of delivery of courses and the program as a whole must be regularly monitored with adjustments made promptly in response to feedback and developments in the external environment affecting the program.
Specific requirements for an institution relating to Standard 2 are specified under the headings of: 2.1 Governing Body 2.2 Leadership 2.3 Planning Processes; 2.4 Relationship Between Sections for Male and Female Students 2.5 Integrity 2.6 Internal Policies and Regulations 2.7 Organizational Climate 2.8 Associated Companies and Controlled Entities.	Specific requirements for a particular program relating to Standard 2 are specified under the headings of: 2.1 Leadership 2.2 Planning Processes 2.3 Relationship Between Sections for Male and Female Students 2.4 Integrity 2.5 Internal Policies and Regulations

Evidence and Performance Indicators

Evidence about the quality of governance and administration can be obtained from the terms of reference for the governing body and major committees, samples of documents recommending decisions by these bodies, and evidence of their self-assessment. Evidence about the quality of policy and regulations, risk assessment analyses or oversight of controlled entities can be obtained by examination of relevant documents and discussions with faculty and staff who might be expected to be aware their contents. Organizational climate can be assessed by survey results or discussion with staff and students.

Indicators could be at least partly based on responses to surveys by teaching and other staff and students, graduates, employers, and professional bodies.

Standard 3: Management of Quality Assurance and Improvement

Standard 3. Management of Program Quality Assurance

Institutional Standard	Program Standard
Quality assurance processes must involve all sections of the institution and be effectively integrated into normal planning and administrative processes. Criteria for assessment of quality must include inputs, processes, and outcomes with a particular focus on outcomes. Processes must be established to ensure that teaching and other staff and students are committed to improvement and regularly evaluate their own performance. Quality must be assessed by reference to evidence and include consideration of data that reports on specific performance indicators and challenging external benchmarks. Specific requirements in the institution's quality assurance system should be periodically reviewed to ensure that unnecessary requirements are not included and that data that is provided is actually used in an effective way.	Teaching and other staff involved in the program must be committed to improving both their own performance and the quality of the program as a whole. Regular evaluations of quality must be undertaken within each course based on valid evidence and appropriate benchmarks, and plans for improvement made and implemented. Quality must be assessed by reference to evidence and include consideration of data that reports on specific performance indicators and challenging external benchmarks. Central importance must be attached to student learning outcomes with each course contributing to the achievement of overall program objectives.
Specific requirements for an institution relating to Standard 3 are specified under the headings of: 3.1 Institutional Commitment to Quality Improvement 3.2 Scope of Quality Assurance Processes	Specific requirements for a particular program relating to Standard 3 are specified under the headings of: 3.1 Commitment to Quality Improvement in the Program

3.3 Administration of Quality Assurance Processes	3.2 Scope of Quality Assurance Processes
3.4 Use of Performance Indicators and Benchmarks	3.3 Administration of Quality Assurance Processes
3.5 Independent Verification of Evaluations	3.4 Use of Performance Indicators and Benchmarks
	3.5 Independent Verification of Evaluations

Evidence and Performance Indicators

Evidence about the quality of management of quality assurance processes can be obtained by looking at the outcomes of those processes, which include progressive improvement in learning outcomes and aspects of the planning and administration of the institution.

Evidence about the processes followed can be obtained from surveys or discussions with staff or students. Other evidence can be gained from the quality of reports on performance by units within the institution, including whether they are evidence-based and appropriately benchmarked in relation to external standards. Information about the quality of services provided by a quality center can be obtained from rates of participation in, and reports on the effectiveness of professional development programs aimed at teaching methodology, quality improvement, consistency and appropriateness of quality-related documents, reports throughout the institution, and assessments of the value and effectiveness of quality assurance processes by students, staff, and senior administrators. The regular use of appropriate key performance indicators and benchmarks (including benchmarks relating to other institutions are particularly important.

The key performance indicators identified by the Commission should be used, but additional indicators linked to the particular mission of the institution and the program should also be used when appropriate. When goals and objectives are established for the development and improvement of the program appropriate performance indicators should be identified as part of that planning process

B. Quality of Learning and Teaching

Standard 4: Learning and Teaching

Institutional Standard	Program Standard
<p>The institution must have an effective system for ensuring that all programs meet high standards of learning and teaching through initial approvals, monitoring of performance, and provision of institution-wide support services. In all programs student learning outcomes must be clearly specified, consistent with the National Qualifications Framework and (for professional programs) requirements for employment or professional practice. Standards of learning must be accessed through appropriate processes and benchmarked against demanding and relevant external reference points. Teaching staff must be appropriately qualified and experienced for their particular teaching responsibilities, use teaching strategies suitable for different kinds of learning outcomes, and participate in activities to improve their teaching effectiveness. Teaching quality and the effectiveness of programs must be evaluated through student assessments and graduate and employer surveys, with feedback used as a basis for plans for improvement. If programs are offered in different sections for male and female students required standards must be the same, equivalent resources must be provided, and evaluations must include data for each section.</p>	<p>Student learning outcomes must be clearly specified, consistent with the National Qualifications Framework and requirements for employment or professional practice. Standards of learning must be accessed through appropriate processes and benchmarked against demanding and relevant external reference points. Teaching staff must be appropriately qualified and experienced for their particular teaching responsibilities, use teaching strategies suitable for different kinds of learning outcomes, and participate in activities to improve their teaching effectiveness. Teaching quality and the effectiveness of programs must be evaluated through student assessments and graduate and employer surveys, with feedback used as a basis for plans for improvement. If the program is offered in different sections for male and female students required standards must be the same, equivalent resources provided, and evaluations must include data for each section.</p>

<p>Specific requirements for an institution relating to Standard 4 are specified under the headings of:</p> <p>4.1 Institutional Oversight of Quality of Learning and Teaching</p> <p>4.2 Student Learning Outcomes</p> <p>4.3 Program Development Processes</p> <p>4.4 Program Evaluation and Review Processes</p> <p>4.5 Student Assessment</p> <p>4.6 Educational Assistance for Students</p> <p>4.7 Quality of Teaching</p> <p>4.8 Support for Improvements in Quality of Teaching</p> <p>4.9 Qualifications and Experience of Teaching Staff</p> <p>4.10 Field Experience Activities</p> <p>4.11 Partnership Arrangements with Other Institutions</p>	<p>Specific requirements for a particular program relating to Standard 4 are specified under the headings of:</p> <p>4.1 Student Learning Outcomes</p> <p>4.2 Program Development Processes</p> <p>4.3 Program Evaluation and Review Processes</p> <p>4.4 Student Assessment</p> <p>4.5 Educational Assistance for Students</p> <p>4.6 Quality of Teaching</p> <p>4.7 Support for Improvements in Quality of Teaching</p> <p>4.8 Qualifications and Experience of Teaching Staff</p> <p>4.9 Field Experience Activities</p> <p>4.10 Partnership Arrangements with Other Institutions</p>
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Evidence and Performance Indicators

Evidence about the quality of learning and teaching may be obtained from ratings by students, graduates, and employers of the quality of programs, statistics on course and program completions and employment outcomes, ratios of students to faculty, and statistics on faculty qualifications. Important sources of evidence might include independent expert advice on the appropriateness of teaching strategies and assessments for the different domains of learning in the *National Qualifications Framework*. Evidence should be available about the results of benchmarking standards of learning outcomes in relation to appropriate external reference points. This could be done in several different ways including check marking of samples of students' work and independent assessments of the standards of test questions and students' responses.

The selection of performance indicators for quality of learning and teaching requires the use of data in a form that can be quantified and used in comparisons across the institution, with other institutions, and with past performance.

C. Support for Student Learning

Standard 5: Student Administration and Support Services

Institutional Standard	Program Standard
<p>Administration of admissions and student record systems must be reliable and responsive, with confidentiality of records maintained in keeping with stated policies. Students' rights and responsibilities must be clearly defined and understood, with transparent and fair procedures available for discipline and appeals. Mechanisms for academic advice, counselling, and support services must be accessible and responsive to student needs. Support services for students must go beyond formal academic requirements and include extracurricular provisions for religious, cultural, sporting, and other activities relevant to the needs of the student body.</p>	<p>Admission processes must be efficient, fair, and responsive to the needs of students entering the program. Clear information about program requirements and criteria for admission and program completion must be readily available for prospective students and when required at later stages during the program. Mechanisms for student appeals and dispute resolution must be clearly described, made known, and fairly administered. Career advice must be provided in relation to occupations related to the fields of study dealt with in the program.</p>
<p>Specific requirements for an institution relating to Standard 5 are specified under the headings of:</p> <p>5.1 Student Admissions</p> <p>5.2 Student Records</p> <p>5.3 Student Management</p> <p>5.4 Planning and Evaluation of Student Services</p> <p>5.5 Medical and Counselling Services</p> <p>5.6 Extra Curricular Activities for Students</p>	<p>Specific requirements for a particular program relating to Standard 5 are specified under the headings of:</p> <p>5.1 Student Admissions</p> <p>5.2 Student Records</p> <p>5.3 Student Management</p> <p>5.4 Student Advising and Counselling Services</p>

Evidence and Performance Indicators

Evidence about the quality of student administration and support services can be obtained from surveys of students about the quality and responsiveness of services provided, usage rates for particular services, response times for communicating decisions on admissions, and the frequency and results of discipline procedures. Performance indicators can be based directly on this information, but additional evidence in a review might include such things as visits to facilities and discussions with students and staff.

Standard 6: Learning Resources

Institutional Standard	Program Standard
Learning resources including libraries and provisions for access to electronic and other reference material must be planned to meet the particular requirements of the institution's programs and provided at an adequate level. Library and associated IT facilities must be accessible at times to support independent learning, with assistance provided in finding material required. Facilities must be provided for individual and group study in an environment conducive to effective investigations and research. The services must be evaluated and should be improved in response to systematic feedback from teaching staff and students.	Learning resource materials and associated services must be adequate for the requirements of the program and the courses offered within it and accessible when required for students in the program. Information about requirements must be made available by teaching staff in sufficient time for necessary provisions to be made for resources required, and staff and students must be involved in evaluations of what is provided. Specific requirements for reference material and on-line data sources and for computer terminals and assistance in using this equipment will vary according to the nature of the program and the approach to teaching.
Specific requirements for an institution relating to Standard 6 are specified under the headings of: 6.1 Planning and Evaluation 6.2 Organization 6.3 Support for Users 6.4 Resources and Facilities	Specific requirements for a particular program relating to Standard 6 are specified under the headings of: 6.1 Planning and Evaluation 6.2 Organization 6.3 Support for Users 6.4 Resources and Facilities

Evidence and Performance Indicators

Evidence about the quality of the provision of learning resources and performance indicators derived from this evidence can be obtained from user satisfaction surveys, success rates for students in accessing course reference material, documents describing processes for identifying and responding to course requirements, and details of times when facilities are available for use by students and faculty. Information should be available about the provision of orientation programs for new students and responsiveness to requests from groups of stakeholders. The institution should be able to provide information about comparisons of the level of provision through books, periodicals, and web-based resources with comparable institutions offering similar programs. An appropriate performance indicator would be whether that level of provision was equalled or exceeded.

D. Supporting Infrastructure

Standard 7: Facilities and Equipment

Institutional Standard	Program Standard
Facilities must be designed or adapted to meet the particular requirements for teaching and learning in the programs offered by the institution, and offer a safe and healthy environment for high quality education. Use of facilities must be monitored and user surveys used to assist in planning for improvement. Adequate provision must be made for classrooms and laboratories, use of computer technology and research equipment by	Adequate facilities and equipment must be available for the teaching and learning requirements of the program. Use of facilities and equipment should be monitored and regular assessments of adequacy made through consultations with teaching and other staff, and students.

teaching staff and students and appropriate provision made for services such as food services, extracurricular activities, and where relevant, student accommodation.	
Specific requirements for an institution relating to Standard 7 are specified under the headings of: 7.1 Policy and Planning 7.2 Quality and Adequacy of Facilities and Equipment 7.3 Management and Administration of Facilities and Equipment 7.4 Information Technology 7.5 Student Residences	Specific requirements for a particular program relating to Standard 7 are specified under the headings of: 7.1 Policy and Planning 7.2 Quality and Adequacy of Facilities and Equipment 7.3 Management and Administration of Facilities and Equipment 7.4 Information Technology

Evidence and Performance Indicators

Evidence about the quality of provision of facilities and equipment can be obtained from planning documents, user satisfaction surveys, reports on responses to those surveys, comparisons of provision with comparable institutions offering similar programs, and direct observations by independent evaluators.

Assessment of the condition of facilities and equipment and maintenance schedules should provide information about the quality and maintenance of facilities and major equipment. Regulations and codes of practice relating to the use of facilities and high value equipment provide evidence of sound management practices and security arrangements. Performance indicators could include such things as ratings on surveys of user satisfaction, statistics on equipment breakdowns, repair and upgrade schedules, and comparisons of provision to comparable institutions.

Standard 8: Financial Planning and Management

Institutional Standard	Program Standard
Financial resources must be adequate for the programs and services offered and efficiently managed in keeping with program requirements and institutional priorities. Budgetary processes should allow for long term planning over at least a three year period. Effective systems must be used for budgeting and for financial delegations and accountability providing flexibility for managers at different levels in the institution combined with institutional oversight and effective risk management.	Financial resources must be sufficient for the effective delivery of the program. Program requirements must be made known sufficiently far in advance to be considered in institutional budgeting. Budgetary processes should allow for long term planning over at least a three year period. Sufficient flexibility must be provided for effective management and responses to unexpected events and this flexibility must be combined with appropriate accountability and reporting mechanisms.
Specific requirements for an institution relating to Standard 8 are specified under the headings of: 8.1 Financial Planning 8.2 Financial Management 8.3 Auditing and Risk Management	Specific requirements for a particular program relating to Standard 8 are specified under the headings of: 8.1 Financial Planning and Budgeting 8.2 Financial Management

Evidence

Evidence about the quality of financial planning and management can be obtained from budget statements and audit reports together with relevant expenditure ratios; such as, staff and faculty salaries to total costs, and trends in expenditure on items such as student services, learning resources, and equipment. Reports on risk assessment should be available together with strategies for risk minimization. If the institution is involved in commercial activities, the short and long term total financial impact should be identified and evaluated in relation to the institution's mission and priorities. Performance indicators in this area commonly rely, to a considerable extent, on ratios of categories of expenditure in comparison to other institutions.

Standard 9: Employment Processes

Institutional Standard	Program Standard
Teaching and other staff must have the qualifications and experience for effective exercise of their responsibilities. Professional development strategies must be followed to ensure continuing improvement in the expertise of teaching and other staff. Performance of all teaching and other staff must be periodically evaluated, with outstanding performance recognized and support provided for improvement when required. Effective, fair, and transparent processes must be available for the resolution of conflicts and disputes involving teaching or other staff. (Note: Teaching staff refers to all staff with responsibility for teaching classes including full and part time staff, faculty, lecturers, and teaching assistants)	Teaching staff must have the knowledge and experience needed for their particular teaching or other responsibilities and their qualifications and experience must be verified before appointment. New teaching staff must be thoroughly briefed about the program and their responsibilities before they begin. Performance of all teaching and other staff must be periodically evaluated, with outstanding performance recognized and support provided for professional development and improvement in teaching skills.
Specific requirements for an institution as a whole relating to Standard 9 are specified under the headings of: 9.1 Policy and Administration 9.2 Recruitment 9.3 Personal and Career Development 9.4 Discipline, Complaints and Dispute Resolution	Specific requirements for a particular program relating to Standard 9 are specified under the headings of: 9.1 Recruitment 9.2 Personal and Career Development

Evidence and Performance Indicators

Evidence about quality of faculty and staff employment processes can be obtained from documents setting out employment and promotion processes and criteria, descriptions of orientation programs for new faculty and staff, and procedures for performance evaluation and support for improvement. Records of assessments of quality of teaching, and faculty and staff participation in professional development activities relevant to their employment can provide valuable evidence, particularly when they include ratios of participation and assessments of the value of those activities by the participants. Data on faculty turnover in parts of the institution can be used to indicate stability or instability in staffing. Regulations on dispute resolution combined with records of the incidence and outcomes of disputes can provide evidence about the effectiveness of those processes.

Performance indicators almost always include student/faculty ratios and proportions of faculty with levels of qualifications. However, a number of other performance indicators that can also be readily quantified are important such as participation ratios in professional development and scholarly activities. Others include; rates of turnover of faculty and staff, and incidence of disputes might be selected if there are problems in the institution that need to be monitored.

Standard 10: Research

Institutional Standard	Program Standard
The institution should develop a research strategy consistent with its nature (e.g. as a university with research obligations or as an undergraduate college) and its mission. All staff teaching higher education programs must be involved in sufficient appropriate scholarly activities to ensure they remain up to date with developments in their field, and those developments should be reflected in their teaching. Staff teaching in postgraduate	A research strategy that is consistent with the nature and mission of the institution should be developed. All staff teaching higher education programs must be involved in sufficient appropriate scholarly activities to ensure they remain up to date with developments in their field, and those developments should be reflected in their teaching. Staff teaching in postgraduate programs or supervising higher degree research students must be actively involved in research in their

<p>programs or supervising higher degree research students must be actively involved in research in their field. Adequate facilities and equipment must be available to support the research activities of teaching staff and post-graduate students to meet these requirements. In universities and other institutions with research responsibility, teaching staff must be encouraged to pursue research interests and to publish the results of that research. Their research contributions must be recognized and reflected in evaluation and promotion criteria. The research output of the institution must be monitored and reported, and benchmarked against that of other similar institutions. Clear and equitable policies must be established for ownership and commercialization of intellectual property.</p>	<p>field. Adequate facilities and equipment must be available to support the research activities of teaching staff and post-graduate students to meet these requirements in areas relevant to the program. Staff research contributions must be recognized and reflected in evaluation and promotion criteria.</p>
<p>Specific requirements for an institution as a whole relating to Standard 10 are specified under the headings of: 10.1 Institutional Research Policies 10.2 Teaching Staff and Student Involvement in Research 10.3 Commercialization of Research 10.4 Research Facilities and Equipment.</p>	<p>Specific requirements for a particular program relating to Standard 10 are specified under the headings of: 10.1 Teaching Staff and Student Involvement in Research 10.2 Research Facilities and Equipment</p>

Evidence and Performance Indicators

Evidence about the institution’s research strategies can be obtained from documents; such as, a research development plan, faculty evaluation and promotion criteria, policies on commercialization of research, ownership of intellectual property, and the extent of cooperation with industry and other institutions. Further evidence can be obtained by consideration of agreements for cooperative research or shared use of major equipment items. Faculty and student surveys can provide evidence about the adequacy of provisions for research facilities and equipment.

Performance indicators for research are commonly based on statistics on the volume of research publications per faculty member, the proportions of research-active faculty, and numbers of research citations, compared to those of other comparable institutions. Although it may be more difficult to quantify, institutions with a commitment to community service or research contributions may wish to include indicators of the extent to which research and scholarly activities are translated into applications within the academic or professional field concerned.

Standard 11: Relationships with the Community

Institutional Standard	Program Standard
<p>Contributing to the community must be recognized as an important institutional responsibility. Facilities and services must be made available to assist with community developments. Teaching and other staff must be encouraged to be involved in the community and information about the institution and its activities made known to the community through public media and other appropriate mechanisms. Community perceptions of the institution must be monitored and appropriate strategies adopted to improve understanding and enhance its reputation.</p>	<p>Significant and appropriate contributions should be made to the community in which the institution is established drawing on the knowledge and experience of staff and the needs of the community for that expertise. Community contributions should include both activities initiated and carried out by individuals and more formal programs of assistance arranged by the institution or by program administrators. Activities should be documented and made known in the institution and the community, and staff contributions appropriately recognized within the institution.</p>
<p>Specific requirements for an institution relating to</p>	<p>Specific requirements for a program relating to</p>

Standard 4 are specified under the headings of: 11.1 Institutional Policies on Community Relationships 11.2 Interactions With the Community 11.3 Institutional Reputation	Standard 11 are specified under the headings of: 11.1 Policies on Community Relationships 11.2 Interactions With the Community
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Evidence and Performance Indicators

Evidence about quality of community relationships can be obtained from documents describing policies on service to the community, criteria for faculty evaluation that include community contributions, and guidelines and processes for community media releases, and other public comments on behalf of the institution. Reports on community relationships that include such matters as community use of institutional facilities, participation of staff on community committees or development projects, and interactions with schools and other agencies can provide relevant information. Community views about the quality of the institution and its standing as a respected member of the community can be obtained from surveys.

A number of these forms of evidence include ratings that can be used directly as performance indicators. However, in this particular area, the mission of the institution and the community within which it operates are important in deciding what aspects of performance should be closely monitored.

2.4 Requirements for a University

The Ministry of Higher Education has established minimum requirements for a private institution to be designated as a university. These Ministry requirements must be met for such an institution to be considered by the Commission for accreditation.

However, there are additional requirements for the *accreditation* of a university. For example, the Ministry requirements include a minimum of three colleges. For *accreditation* there must be programs in at least three fields of study.

The Commission requirements relate to the breadth of program offerings, the levels of programs offered, the extent of involvement in research, the existence of sustained scholarly activity by teaching staff, and the size of an institution considered necessary to sustain these activities at a viable level.

The requirements stated here are appropriate for a university with a mission that focuses on teaching rather than research and should be considered as a minimum desirable. It is expected that an established university with commitment in its mission to be a research university and to achieve international ranking would have substantially higher levels of research activity and postgraduate research than are stated here and would benchmark its performance in research and postgraduate studies against highly regarded international universities.

Minimum specific requirements are:

Breadth of Programs

Programs offered in at least three broad fields of learning¹ with a minimum of 5% of the institution's students enrolled in programs in each of the three fields.

¹For the purposes of this requirement the following are considered broad fields of learning. 1. *Fine and Performing Arts*, 2. *Humanities and Religious Studies*, 3. *Education*, 4. *Social Sciences*, 5. *Business and Management*, 6. *Law*, 7. *Science*, 8. *Computer Science*, 9. *Engineering Manufacturing and Construction*, 10. *Agriculture and Related Studies*, 11. *Health Sciences*, 12. *Personal and Community Services (This classification is subject to periodic review)*

Level of Programs Offered

Undergraduate programs should be provided in at least three fields of study. At postgraduate levels, programs should be offered up to the level of doctorates in at least one of those fields and at least master's degrees in a second. At least 5 % of students must be enrolled in higher degree programs. At least 2.5% should be enrolled in research degrees.

Involvement in Research

At least 2.5% of the annual operating budget of the institution (excluding student stipends) should be spent on research or the support of research. This amount can include special research grants, the institution's share of joint research and development projects, and the provision of support for specialized research equipment for staff and postgraduate student research. However, it does not include funding for the teaching of postgraduate research other programs, or general program administration.

Sustained Scholarly Activity

Teaching faculty at all levels in the institution should be involved in scholarly activities that ensure familiarity with the latest developments in their field and include exposure to those developments in their teaching.– Staff who are teaching at postgraduate level are expected to be qualified at the doctoral level and to be active scholars and researchers, as evidenced by recent refereed publications. Where professional programs are offered at postgraduate level, an alternative to doctoral qualifications for an appropriate proportion of teaching faculty may be extensive, successful, and recent experience in the relevant field of study.

Size of Institution

The minimum size normally required for a university actively involved in research and postgraduate study to be economically viable expressed in terms of student enrollments is 2000 full time equivalent students in higher education award programs. This number does not include students enrolled in foundation or preparatory programs, or in other non-award courses. Depending on the level of funding available in a private university, a smaller number could be demonstrated to be sufficient.

Evidence and Performance Indicators

Evidence about the quality of a university can be obtained from a range of sources relating to the special requirements for such an institution. General information should include matters relevant to all higher education institutions; such as, statistical data on enrollments, progression rates, graduation rates, responses to surveys of graduates and employers compared to other institutions. For a university, performance indicators should include information on the extent and impact of scholarship and research through numbers of publications and citations in refereed research journals, rates of publication of postgraduate student research, funds provided for research, and numbers of patents. For an established university, a useful source of evidence would be inclusion and position in international rankings of universities.

2.5 Interim Arrangements for Accreditation of Universities

The Commission recognizes that there are a number of new public and private universities that have been established in Saudi Arabia. Their undergraduate programs may be very good but it may take some time for the requirements for research and postgraduate studies to be met. Accordingly the Commission has indicated that will not deny accreditation to these institutions provided certain initial requirements are met. These initial requirements, which will be in place for the first cycle of accreditation reviews (2010 to 2015), the following minimum requirements, will apply.

Planning for the Development of Research and Postgraduate Studies

The institution must have a strategic plan that meets the minimum requirements described in the previous section and **Standard 10 Research**, within a period of five years.

Breadth of Studies

Programs offered at least at the bachelor's degree level in at least three broad fields of study

Level of Programs

Approval from the Ministry of Higher Education and introduction of at least one postgraduate program.

Involvement in Research

A minimum of 2.5 percent of the annual operating budget spent on support for research. (This amount could be from a combination of internal and external sources) This expenditure could include special research grants, the institution's share of joint research and development projects, and the provision of support for specialized research equipment for staff and postgraduate student research. However, it should not include funding for the teaching of postgraduate research or other programs, or general program administration.

Sustained Scholarly Activity

Active encouragement of teaching staff to participate in conferences in their field of study, and arrangements for seminars or workshops on current issues and research in every college or department. Annual publication of listings of all faculty refereed publications during the past year.

Indicators

At least 10% of all teaching staff and 75% of staff teaching postgraduate programs are expected to have published articles in refereed journals in their field within the past three years (allowing some consideration for teaching by experienced senior practitioners in the professional field concerned).

Annual collection and analysis of research indicators for each college or department and the total institution including total research expenditure, research grants received, numbers of academic publications in refereed journals each year, proportions of teaching staff with refereed publications in the last three years.

ATTACHMENT

Concepts and Terminology for Use in Accreditation and Quality Assurance in Saudi Arabia

To assist in achieving common understanding of important concepts and terms used in the system of accreditation and quality assurance, the NCAAA has determined that for its purposes the terms identified below will have the meanings described. The definitions are shown in italics, followed by explanatory notes.

Accountability

The responsibility of an individual, an institution, or an organization to another authority for his or her, or its activities.

In postsecondary education an institution is usually “accountable” and must provide reports to a government or government agency that provides it with funds or approves its establishment. Within an institution, faculty and staff are “accountable” to senior management and senior management in turn is responsible to a Board or Council.

In systems of accreditation and quality assurance there is usually a separation of the organizations responsible for institutional accountability and those responsible for independent quality assessment.

Accreditation

Formal certification by a recognized authority that a program or an institution meets required standards.

To be accredited, institutions or programs must comply with generally accepted standards of good practice. The Commission has defined the standards it will apply in two documents, Standards for Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education Institutions and Standards for Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education Programs. Reference is also made to several other documents including the National Qualifications Framework that describes expected general standards of learning outcomes in four domains of learning and a statement showing the application of these standards to distance education programs. These statements are expressed in general terms applicable to all fields of study. It is also necessary for programs to meet requirements for professional practice in many professional fields. Details of these requirements are not yet available from the Commission. Until they are available institutions are expected to give consideration to the requirements of specialized international accreditors in the field of study concerned. Accreditation may be given initially on a provisional basis, and this will normally be done when plans for a new program or institution are considered. After a program has been in operation for sufficient time for the first group of students to complete their program, a review will be conducted, the provisional designation may be removed and the program given full accreditation. Accreditation will normally be valid for a period of five years after which programs will need to be reviewed for reaccreditation on a five yearly basis.

In the quality assurance systems of different countries there are several different forms of accreditation. See descriptions of institutional accreditation, program accreditation, professional accreditation, provisional accreditation, and international accreditation.

Assessment

A process of measuring performance in relation to established standards or criteria.

Assessment is commonly applied in two different contexts: the assessment of student’s performance on tests or examinations or other assigned tasks in order to measure their achievement of intended learning outcomes; and the process of measuring the quality of performance of elements within an educational institution.

In the second of these instances the term is used for assessment of quality of teaching, the effectiveness of a program or a course in achieving its objectives, or the effectiveness of many other elements of an institution's operations. Standards of performance for the purposes of these assessments can be derived from different sources, but from the perspective of the Commission in carrying out its accreditation and approval responsibilities the standards are defined in the documents it has approved for these purposes, particularly the National Qualifications Framework and the Standards for Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions.

Audit

An independent review to verify that reports represent a true and correct record of activity, and that recognized standards have been met.

The term "audit" is widely used for financial audits conducted by an independent authority to certify the accuracy of financial reports and compliance with accounting standards.

In postsecondary quality systems the term is used for external independent reviews of an institution's quality and the processes of quality assurance it has established. These reviews are principally based on reports of self-studies carried out by an institution, and, like financial audits, verify the conclusions of those self studies. Although standards of good practice are considered in this process, in a quality audit it is customary to give particular attention to the objectives established by an institution and to report on whether the processes used in an institution are effective in achieving those objectives.

Benchmarks

Points of comparison or levels of performance used for establishing objectives and evaluating performance.

Benchmarks may be current levels of performance at an institution (for example, the current completion rate for students in business studies), standards established by an external agency, or standards of performance at another institution or group of institutions selected for comparison. (For example, the number of research publications per full time of an academic staff member at the University of xxxxx). An institution may select another institution similar to itself as a benchmark against which it can compare the quality of its work, or particular parts of an institution against which equivalent groups within their own institution can be compared. It is usually considered desirable in making these comparisons to use indicators (such as those noted above) that can be stated in specific terms.

Blended Learning

A program in which students are taught through a combination of regular on campus instruction and distance education or packaged materials.

Arrangements can be made for blended modes of instruction in a variety of ways including a regular on campus course in which sections of the course are taught using packaged self contained materials, or a program in which some courses are taught using distance education methodology and some through on campus lectures, tutorials or other face-to-face methodology. In situations where blended approaches are used appropriate forms of student assistance and support must be provided to support students learning in both forms of instruction.

Credits

Points or hours allocated by an institution to specify the work requirements, or the volume or amount of learning expected for a unit, subject or program of study.

It is common practice to assign a number of credits to units or courses within a program and to specify a number of credits for a total program. Credits may be associated with program inputs such as hours of instruction, laboratory work, or expectations for time spent in self-directed study. The term “credit hours” is used in these systems based on formulae that give differing levels of recognition for formal instruction, laboratory or tutorial participation, and practical work. In some other systems the term “credit points” is used for the notional amount of learning achieved by an average learner over a period of time. The number of credits allocated for a particular amount of work or learning varies among countries. For example, some countries use the-American based Carnegie credit hour system which allocates 30 credit hours for the amount of academic work normally expected in a full time academic year of study at undergraduate level. Some other countries use 120 points for an equivalent volume of learning. Common practice in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is to use 30 credit hours (or slightly more depending on the number of contact hours and mode of instruction) for the work expected in an academic year.

Distance Education

A mode of teaching and learning in which students undertake a major proportion of their studies on an individual basis at a location or locations away from the campus of an institution.

Student learning may be supported by print or electronic materials, and a variety of mechanisms are sometimes used for interaction between students, through the internet, video or radio linkages, or periodic study group activities in appropriate locations. Similarly interaction with faculty may take a variety of forms.

A distance education institution is one that offers all its programs by distance education (whether through print-based materials or through electronic learning or a combination of both) to students who do not attend classes on campus, but instead study in their own locations, often at a time of their own choosing. Where combinations of distance education processes or packaged self-contained materials are used within courses, or for different courses within a program, the terms blended learning or dual mode instruction are frequently used to describe these modes. Dual mode institutions are ones that offer a combination of distance education and campus based programs.

Domains of Learning

Broad categories of types of learning expected in a program of study.

Descriptions of the knowledge and skill students are expected to gain in a program are grouped into broad categories called domains. Although the number and titles for these groupings vary, domains commonly include five to seven broad categories that involve different types of learning and strategies for teaching and assessment of learning in those categories. The domains used in the higher education component of the National Qualifications Framework for Saudi Arabia are Knowledge, (the ability to recall and present information), Cognitive Skills (the ability to apply concepts and principles in thinking and problem solving), Interpersonal Skills and Responsibility, (the ability to work effectively in groups, exercise leadership, and take responsibility for their own independent learning, and the ethical and moral development that is associated with these abilities), and Communication, Information Technology and Numerical Skills (including basic mathematical and communication skills and the ability to use communications technology). Psychomotor skills are very important in some fields of study and are considered as an additional domain where relevant to the program concerned.

Dual Mode Institution

Dual mode institutions are institutions that offer some programs to students through distance education and some through traditional campus based instruction.

It is increasingly common for institutions to use electronic materials and learning packages as supplements to the methods of instruction in campus based studies and these may take a variety of forms. Where this is done

the approach may have many similarities to distance education methodology. However the terms “dual mode” is normally used for institutions that offer both off campus distance education programs and campus based instruction.

Evaluation

The process of assessing and assigning value to a facility or activity.

The term evaluation is sometimes used interchangeably with assessment but it has a slightly different meaning associated with judgments about the quality or value of the matter being considered. The “valuing” component of consideration may be more open-ended and interpretive than an assessment which is normally associated with measurement of performance in relation to fixed and predetermined standards.

External Quality Assurance

Processes of review and evaluation of institutions and their programs and activities by an independent external agency.

External quality assurance normally involves periodic, independent peer reviews based on reports of internal self-studies and designed for the dual purposes of assessing quality and validating the conclusions of internal studies.

External quality assessments are usually more selective than internal reviews, and may pay particular attention to student learning outcomes and other matters identified as policy priorities by the institution, or by the government or governing body to which the institution is accountable. External quality assurance may involve consideration of selected key performance indicators to be used in reviews on a national basis.

Further Education

Education and training provided for members of the community other than through formal award programs.

Further education programs do not lead to academic awards or technical qualifications such as a degree or diploma. However, a certificate may be given on completion of a further education program. Further education programs may be offered through formal classes or a variety of informal means to provide skills and information of value to members of the community.

Goals or Aims

General statements of desired developments, which apply a mission to broad areas of activity and provide a guide for establishing objectives and detailed planning.

Goals or aims fall between mission, which defines a broad overall purpose, and specific objectives established as specific targets for achievement. Goals and aims may be broadly stated to give direction to the development of a program or implementation of planning initiatives and they may relate to any aspect of an institution’s activities. Effective use of aims or goals in planning normally requires statements of objectives that describe specific measurable outcomes by a specified time.

Higher Education

Formal programs of education provided for students at postsecondary level, normally leading to an academic degree or diploma.

The term higher education is used for postsecondary education programs designed to provide generalized knowledge and skill in a field of study and to develop the ability to apply that learning to professional practice and the advancement of knowledge through research. Although requirements for professional practice and employment are important in development of programs, major consideration is also given to emerging research in their own and related fields of study.

Higher education may be provided through a university or a higher education college. The term University Education simply means higher education provided through a university. It may have a greater emphasis on research than a similar program offered in a college because of the greater expectation for research in universities. However, the nature of education provided in both kinds of institution should be the same.

Inputs

The resources available to and used by an institution to provide its programs.

Inputs include financial resources, facilities and equipment, faculty, and students. Indicators of quality of faculty as an input could include the number of faculty and their levels of qualifications and staff/student ratios. Indicators of equipment as an input could include indicators; such, as the ratio of computer terminals to students, or proportions of down-time due to equipment malfunction.

Until recently quality assurance systems have relied heavily on input indicators as measures of quality, using things such as financial resources, qualifications of faculty, extent of library collections and availability of computer equipment. However although these are still important as enabling provisions, emphasis has shifted towards outcome measures relating to the quality of research and student learning outcomes.

Institutional Approval

The approval of an institution based on recognition that its resources, processes and learning outcomes meet required standards for an institution of its type and the level of its programs.

Approval of an institution will normally specify the fields of study the institution is able to offer and the levels at which this can be done. The final license issued to permit the institution to operate will specify the levels and range of programs it is permitted to offer. For example, a college may be accredited to offer programs in business studies and engineering up to the level of bachelor, and in applied science up to the level of diploma. A university focusing on those particular fields may be approved to offer programs up to doctoral level in science, engineering, and business and up to master's level in social sciences.

Institutional approval indicates that an institution is considered to have the capacity to offer programs in designated fields of study up to the level specified. The final license will formally specify what is authorized. Each program offered within these limits must be accredited, to ensure that the program meets required standards.

Internal Quality Assurance

Processes of quality assurance carried out within and by or for a higher education institution.

Internal quality assurance includes not only the processes of monitoring and review that an institution manages itself, but also its use of external reviewers from other institutions, from industry, the professions, or from other accreditation or quality assurance agencies to review and provide advice on its programs and activities. Internal quality assurance is normally comprehensive, addressing inputs, processes, and outcomes, with all areas of an institution's activities, including faculty, staff, and students in all parts of the institution.

International Accreditation

Accreditation of an institution or of its programs by an accreditation agency established in another country.

A number of institutions have arranged for evaluation and accreditation of their colleges or programs by international accrediting agencies as part of their quality assurance arrangements. This has proved valuable in stimulating rigorous internal reviews and enhancing quality, and in establishing their reputation. These activities are not required as part of the accreditation and quality assurance system in Saudi Arabia, but when they are carried out they are considered part of the institution's internal quality assurance and review processes, and the work done and conclusions reached will be considered and taken into account during the reviews conducted by the Commission.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

Selected performance indicators regarded as particularly important for the purpose of assessing performance.

An institution may identify a short list of KPIs that it regards as particularly important in assessing performance, and may require evidence on those KPIs from a number of sections of the institution in addition to any others that different groups may choose for their own purposes. Similarly, a national quality agency, such as the Commission, may identify a small list of KPIs reflecting national issues or policy objectives for use by all institutions.

Learning Outcomes

The learning that results from participation in a course or program.

The term learning outcomes is commonly used to refer to the learning that results from a course or program undertaken by students. Learning outcomes are the result of the teaching process. Reference is often made to Intended Learning Outcomes to mean the learning objectives a course or program is designed to develop.

The NCAA has identified broad categories or types of learning outcomes in five groups or domains: knowledge, cognitive skills, interpersonal skills and responsibility, communication, IT and numerical skills, and psychomotor skills. It has described in general terms the level of knowledge and skill expected for different qualifications. There are differences in how these learning outcomes are developed by students and an important aspect of program and course planning is to plan for teaching processes and forms of assessment that will be appropriate for these different types of intended learning outcomes.

Level

The intellectual standard and complexity of learning expected as students progress through a program of study.

The degree of difficulty or complexity of learning increases as students advance through a program and these increases are defined by descriptions of the learning outcomes that are expected. Levels may be defined for years of study—first year, second year, third year, and so on, or for academic awards such as a diploma, bachelor's, master's, and doctorate.

License

Formal approval, normally by a government or a government agency, to operate or carry out certain activities.

A license may be given to an institution formally authorizing it to commence operation and offer programs in fields and at levels specified in the license. If the license is revoked the institution must cease to operate. A different type of license may also be given to individuals permitting them to engage in certain activities. A license may be granted to individuals who have completed professional programs and who wish to practice in that profession.

Licensing and accreditation are closely linked. The granting of a license for an institution to operate normally follows or is conditional on assessment of its quality through an approval and accreditation process. The granting of a license for a person to practice in a profession normally follows accreditation of the program that such a person has completed.

Major Change in a Program

A major change in a program is one that affects the basis for its accreditation.

It is expected that adjustments will be required in programs and courses from time to time in response to changing circumstances and results of course and program evaluations. Such changes are highly desirable to ensure that programs are to be kept up to date. However if there is a major change to an accredited program it could affect the program's accreditation status and any such change should be approved by an institutions senior academic committee and notification to the Commission at least one full semester before it is introduced. The Commission can then assess the impact of the change on accreditation. Examples of major changes would be the addition or deletion of a major track within a program, (e.g. accounting or international finance majors within a commerce or business degree), the addition or deletion of a core course (e.g. mathematics in an engineering degree), a change in title that implied a new or different field of study or qualification in a different profession, re-orientation or development of a program to prepare students for a different occupation or profession, a change in the length of a program, or a new exit point within a longer program (e.g. the granting of a diploma within a bachelors degree program) The Commission should also be notified if a succession of minor programs has a cumulative effect that is equivalent to a major change as described above.

Mission

A brief general statement setting out the principal policy objectives for development of an institution.

While stated in general terms a mission statement should be sufficiently precise to serve as a guide to planning and decision making at all levels of the organization, and should be used as a basis for decision making. (e.g., "To develop an international reputation for the quality of applied research and technology transfer, and for the creativity and entrepreneurial skill of graduates.")

Mode of Instruction

The form of instruction such as lecture, tutorial, laboratory, individual assignment, etc.

Organization for instruction is normally based on planned modes of instruction with credit hour allocations based on the amount of contact time in each of these modes. Examples are lectures, tutorials, or laboratories. The term should not be confused with teaching strategies which are the techniques used by an instructor operating within one or more of those modes to present information, develop problem solving skills or habits of responsibility. Different strategies can be incorporated into various modes of instruction as part of educational planning to develop desired learning outcomes.

Objectives

Specific statements that apply the mission and goals to particular areas of activity and indicate intended results.

Desirably objectives should be stated in specific measurable terms setting out intended levels of performance that are to be achieved within stated time periods. Objectives may relate to intended learning outcomes and may be referred to as learning, course or program objectives. Objectives may also be set for program or institutional developments not necessarily related to learning outcomes. Objectives may be expressed as specific performance levels on indicators. (For example, "That by 2008, 80% of final year undergraduate students will have achieved a score of at least xxxx on xxxx English language test.") Objectives may be criterion referenced (based on defined levels of performance) or norm referenced (based on comparisons of performance with other groups or institutions).

Outcomes

The results of teaching, learning and research processes of an institution.

This term is usually used for qualitative descriptions of what is produced by an institution or in a program as a result of its processes. For example, reference to student learning outcomes normally means the quality of their learning and what they are able to do as a result of completing the programs in which they were enrolled. Similarly, research outcomes usually relate to the quality and impact of research rather than simply a count of the numbers of publications or research projects completed.

Outputs

The products of an institutions activities, normally expressed in quantitative terms.

Outputs usually refer to quantitative measures of what is produced by an institution, such as the number of graduates or the number of faculty research publications.

Partner Institution

An institution with which a higher education institution has established a formal, contractual relationship for provision of services.

The exact nature of partnership arrangements can vary. In some cases a partnership may simply involve provision of a number of support services to a local institution. In others arrangements are made for the academic awards of the partner institution to be granted for studies undertaken in a local institution under supervision. However, regardless of whether the awards are granted by a local institution or by an overseas provider, the requirements for operating an institution or teaching a program in Saudi Arabia must be fully met.

Peer Review

Evaluation and report on a program, institution or part of an institution by expert evaluators from similar institutions or professions who are specialists in the field concerned or with the organization and management of higher education institutions.

An important element in this concept is that the evaluators are peers, with experience in similar programs or institutions, who understand the nature, purposes, and challenges faced by an institution. It is important that their understanding is recognized by the institution under review. It is also essential that those involved be completely independent of the institution being reviewed so there is no real or perceived conflict of interest, carefully trained for their task and committed to assisting in improvement. They should be sensitive to the mission and objectives of the institution and programs involved and familiar with international standards for the type of program or institution under review.

Performance Indicators

Specific (and normally pre-selected) forms of evidence used by an institution or other agency to provide evidence about quality of performance.

Performance indicators should be specific and directly related to the aims and objectives to which they relate. However, direct measures of some of the most important objectives such as quality of students' learning are sometimes difficult to find. Consequently, indirect evidence such as student evaluations of programs, employment outcomes, and employer surveys must sometimes be used. Since indirect indicators can be subject to other influences, it is usual to use several different but related indicators for important objectives, and to interpret these using some independent system to verify the interpretations. The term triangulation is sometimes used where several indicators are used to provide evidence about an objective from different points of view. For example, evidence about quality of faculty could be obtained from several indicators such as levels of qualifications, research output, and student ratings of teaching effectiveness.

Postsecondary Education

Education provided at levels and standards beyond completion of secondary school or equivalent.

The term tertiary education is sometimes used to describe this stage as a third stage in education systems beyond primary (first stage) and secondary (second stage) education. Postsecondary programs fall into two broad categories, higher education and technical or vocational training. Note that vocational training is sometimes offered also at levels equivalent to senior secondary education.

Postgraduate Education

Education provided at advanced levels of complexity and intellectual demand for students who have completed requirements for a first degree and wish to proceed to more advanced studies.

Postgraduate studies normally lead to an academic award of postgraduate diploma, master's degree or doctorate. A second bachelor's degree or other award in a related or different field of study is not regarded as postgraduate.

Processes

The administrative arrangements, policies, and organizational procedures carried out by an institution in planning, reviewing, and delivering its programs.

Processes are what is done in an institution to use the inputs available to it to produce its outputs and outcomes. The term includes teaching processes, assessment procedures, and processes for managing research and community activities as well as a wide range of other activities that have direct or indirect impact on educational programs.

Professional Accreditation

The accreditation of a program to prepare students for a profession, certifying that it develops the knowledge and skills needed to practice in the profession concerned at the standard of proficiency required.

Professional accreditation is designed to ensure that in addition to meeting general academic standards, programs develop the specific knowledge and skills to practice the profession concerned in the community. In most countries this applies in professional fields such as medicine and other health-related fields, engineering, accounting, psychology, law, and many others. In some countries this form of specialized professional

accreditation may be given by professional associations recognized by the government for this purpose, or by government agencies.

This form of accreditation differs from academic accreditation, which certifies that a program meets academic standards and conforms to requirements of a qualifications framework. In practice, both academic and professional accreditation is normally required for professional fields although the two may be combined in a single accreditation process.

Program

A coherent course of study followed by students in an academic or professional field or leading to a professional qualification, the successful completion of which qualifies them for an academic award.

A program is regarded as an integrated package of courses and activities leading to a qualification, but the distinction between what is regarded as a single program or a cluster of related programs is difficult to define and may be best explained through examples.

A bachelor's degree program to prepare a student as a civil engineer would be regarded as a different program from one to prepare a mechanical engineer, even though there may be some courses that are common to both. Similarly, if a student had completed the bachelors degree program and wished to take a postgraduate program leading to a master's degree or a doctorate in the same general field that would be regarded as a separate program. The test in these examples relates to there being a qualification that is regarded as being complete in itself, and in the case of a professional program, qualifying the person who has taken the program for professional practice in the field. The distinction does not necessarily relate to organization of an institution or college into departments. In the particular example given it is likely that a civil engineering department would offer both the undergraduate and the postgraduate programs. It would also be possible if an institution wished to organize itself in that way for a single department to offer programs in both civil and mechanical engineering.

The title of an academic award is not necessarily a useful guide to what should be regarded as a program. For example, general titles such as Bachelor of Arts, or Business, or Science, could include many different programs. In an Arts degree there could be programs in history and or social sciences, in psychology, in social work, or many others. A Business degree could include separate programs for accountants, for economists, or for management and administration, and these would be different programs leading to quite different occupational skills.

While the programs that have been used in these examples should be regarded as separate entities, and should be accredited as such, groups of related programs can be considered together in the accreditation process provided it is possible for external review panels to include the necessary expertise.

Program Accreditation

Accreditation of a program of study certifying that it meets standards required for the delivery of a program in that field at the level concerned.

Accreditation of a programs involves a judgment that the quality and standards are appropriate for the award to which it leads. The assessment of standards takes into account both the nature of teaching and learning in different fields of study, and the level, complexity, and quantity of learning required for the award. The general standards of learning outcomes for programs that lead to awards such as bachelor's, master's or doctorate are defined in the National Qualifications Framework and must be met in all programs leading to these awards, regardless of the type of institution offering the program. In addition to meeting the requirements of the Framework a program must meet the standards set out in the NCAAA, "Standards for Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Higher Education Programs", and in a professional program, must provide the particular knowledge and skill required for practice in the field concerned.

Provisional Accreditation

Accreditation granted on a temporary basis for a new institution or program after assessment of plans for development.

For a new institution or program provisional accreditation may be given on the basis of detailed plans. This allows the institution to start operating, or to teach the program, with reasonable confidence that if the plans are implemented as proposed accreditation is likely to be granted. This process means that students can rely on the quality of the institution and of the provisionally accredited program when it is first introduced. The actions of the institution during this preliminary stage are monitored and reports on progress must be provided. Full accreditation must be applied for when the first group of students have completed their programs. If the plans are not implemented at an acceptable level of quality within the time specified, the provisional accreditation will lapse and the license to operate or offer the program will be revoked.

Qualifications Framework

A document setting out the nature, amount, and levels or standards of learning required for academic or technical awards.

Qualifications frameworks specify increasing levels of mastery of knowledge and skills that are required for academic, vocational, or technical awards.

Learning expectations are described in broad areas or domains, such as knowledge and the ability to recall information, cognitive skills such as the mastery of concepts, principles and theories and ability to apply them in problem solving and critical thinking, skills in communication and information technology, capacity for self directed learning, and ability to work effectively and constructively in group situations. Qualifications frameworks may also incorporate student attributes relating to values and cultural awareness that reflect national culture and educational policy.

In many cases, the broadly defined frameworks are associated with more detailed specification of the particular knowledge and skill required for specific professional fields or disciplines of knowledge. These may be used as basic reference points for programs leading to professional accreditation and for the registration or licensing of graduates to practice in professional fields such as medicine, engineering, accounting, law, or education.

Quality

The value, worth, or standard of an institution or program in relation to generally accepted standards for an institution or program of its type.

Assessments of quality are generally based on performance in relation to generally accepted standards of good practice, but also “fitness for purpose”, which recognizes that there are differing requirements for different types of institutions or programs, and important differences in mission that are relevant to consideration of an institution’s quality. Consideration is also given to “fitness of purpose” taking into account the appropriateness of the mission of an institution for the environment within which it operates.

The term “quality” is a relative one comparable to “value”, “worth” or “standard” in other contexts. To be of use in planning and evaluation in postsecondary education the term should be related to some defined characteristics, and to some levels or benchmarks of performance.

When used as a general term without specification of any particular characteristics of the system (for example as in “the quality of higher education” or “the quality of an institution”) it will be taken to refer to a range of elements including but not limited to the level of student achievement, the ability and qualifications of faculty, the standard of facilities and equipment, the effectiveness of teaching, planning and administrative processes,

and the relevance of programs. In the system of quality assurance and accreditation in Saudi Arabia, reference in assessing quality should be made to the standards identified by the NCAAA in eleven areas of activity.

In any specific situation some aspects of performance may be of relatively high quality and others of relatively low quality and the balance may depend on the mission and priorities of an institution. Consequently an overall assessment must take into account value judgements about the selection and relative importance of characteristics for consideration, and an understanding of what should be regarded as good practice in relation to each of them.

“Quality” is sometimes defined by quality agencies as meaning the single dimension of “fitness for purpose”, an approach that gives particular prominence to the importance of diversity between institutions in mission and objectives. Under this definition the standard of performance is meant to be subsumed within the concept of fitness for the purposes (or mission and objectives) defined by institutions.

Because of potential confusion arising from differing interpretations and a need for clear guidance for institutions about criteria for evaluations of quality, most quality agencies make specific reference to “general criteria of good practice” in defining criteria for evaluation, and provide guidelines or reference documents that spell out matters for consideration and descriptions of what is regarded as good practice.

Quality Assurance

Processes of assessment, evaluation, and follow-up relating to quality of performance, which serve two distinct purposes:

- *To ensure that desired levels of quality are maintained and improved; and*
- *To assure stakeholders that quality is being maintained at levels comparable to good practice in highly regarded institutions elsewhere in the world.*
- *Stakeholders in this context include students, the government, and the wider community, including parents, professional associations, and industry.*

Quality assurance normally involves both internal and external processes. Mechanisms for quality assurance are expected within each institution on a continuing basis as part of normal program provision and usually involve some external input. However, the public credibility of claims of quality requires periodic external validation by an independent authority and the independent external advice is also an important element in strategies for improvement.

Quality Improvement

Changes in inputs, processes, and outcomes that improve the quality of performance, usually across the whole range of an institution’s activities. The term may be used to describe the strategies used by an institution or other organization to bring about these changes and verify their results.

While principal responsibility for quality improvement necessarily rests with an institution delivering programs, actions taken by an outside authority through support services, incentives, or regulations may assist in a number of ways, and may also be described as quality improvement strategies. The term “quality enhancement” used in some quality assurance systems is considered to have the same meaning as “quality improvement”.

Responsible Ministry

The Ministry responsible for the establishment, regulation, or supervision of a higher education institution.

A number of different Ministries have responsibility for postsecondary institutions in their field of activity, and have established regulations for their activities. They may provide funding support, assist with quality improvement, and normally have systems for accountability including annual reporting arrangements. In its assessments of quality for purposes of accreditation and quality assurance, the Commission considers both the activities of the institutions and the results of their interactions with the responsible Ministry with which they are involved.

Substantial Equivalence

A judgement that a unit, subject or other component of a program is equal in quality and equivalent in scope to one offered elsewhere.

This concept is particularly important when consideration is being given to allocation of credit for studies done at another institution, either within the country or elsewhere. The details of what is taught and the approach taken in teaching vary according to the needs and background of different groups of students and the environment in which they live. Adaptations to meet these needs should not become a barrier to recognition for credit provided essential skills and understandings are developed and standards maintained.

Student Attributes

Special characteristics of students developed as a result of the particular policies and teaching strategies of an institution.

The development of particular student attributes is often an important part of the mission of an institution. For example an institution may adopt procedures to ensure students are particularly self-reliant, more creative and entrepreneurial, or more effective than would normally be the case in group situations. The term is normally reserved for attitudes, skills, and habits of behaviour or personality characteristics that are exhibited in students' behaviour in outside situations rather than for purely academic learning outcomes which may refer to abilities rather than actual behaviour.

Teaching Strategies

The strategies used by an instructor to develop student learning.

Teaching strategies are the specific techniques used to develop student learning in various domains. Strategies may include; for example, question sequences to develop or apply concepts to new situations, value clarification, use of advance organizers to assist with memorization and recall of information, case studies, and group problem solving tasks, simulations, role playing and so on. The term should not be confused with "modes of instruction", a term used to describe the form of organization for teaching or the delivery of training, such as lecture, tutorial, or laboratory.

Technical Training

(See Vocational and Technical Training below)

Tertiary Education

Education programs offered beyond the level of secondary school.

Tertiary education is education at the third level that is beyond the first level (primary school), and second level, (secondary school). Tertiary education is offered in two broad categories, higher education which normally leads to academic degrees in a university or higher education college, and technical or vocational education and

training designed to provide the knowledge and skills required for employment in specified trades and industries.

Value-Added

The process of adding value (normally applied to the value of students knowledge and skill) as a result of the teaching and learning activities of an institution or program.

The general level of knowledge and skills of students entering programs can vary widely between institutions. Consequently the concept of “value-adding” is important in considering the contribution an institution makes to students learning. While an important concept in considering the quality of an institution’s activities, it is difficult to apply objectively since documenting the extent of “value-added” depends on accurate measures of incoming knowledge and skills and valid attribution of causes of growth.

Vocational and Technical Training

Training programs designed in cooperation with industry to provide the knowledge and skills needed for employment.

The terms vocational training and technical training are used for training or educational programs designed to provide the specific knowledge and skills for employment in specified trades and occupations. Programs are usually competency-based with competencies defined in consultation with employers.

In many systems the terms vocational and technical training are interchangeable. However practice in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has been to use the term “vocational” for the type of program offered at levels equivalent to senior secondary school, and to use the term “technical training” for programs at postsecondary levels.



**National Commission for Academic Accreditation
&
Assessment**

**Handbook for Quality Assurance
and
Accreditation in Saudi Arabia**

PART 2

Internal Quality Assurance Arrangements

Internal Quality Assurance Arrangements

National Commission for Academic Accreditation & Assessment

**Riyadh
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia**

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INTRODUCTION

The National Commission for Academic Accreditation & Assessment has been established in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia with responsibility for determining standards and criteria for academic accreditation and assessment and for accrediting postsecondary institutions and the programs they offer. The Commission is committed to a strategy of encouraging, supporting, and evaluating the quality assurance processes of postsecondary institutions to ensure that quality of learning and management of institutions are equivalent to the highest international standards. These high standards and levels of achievement must be widely recognized both within the Kingdom and elsewhere in the world.

This Handbook has been prepared to assist institutions in introducing and developing internal quality assurance processes and in preparing for the external peer reviews that the Commission will conduct to verify the achievement of high standards of performance.

Part 1 of the Handbook is intended to give a general overview of the system for quality assurance and accreditation. It describes the principles that underlie the approach taken by the Commission, summarizes standards that will be applied in quality assurance and accreditation judgments, and briefly outlines the stages involved in the approval of institutions and accreditation of programs. This part of the Handbook also includes an explanation of a number of terms used for the quality assurance and accreditation system in Saudi Arabia.

Part 2 of the Handbook focuses on internal quality assurance processes. It provides advice on establishing an institution's quality center, processes of planning, evaluation and internal reporting on educational programs, and self study and improvement of institutional activities. Templates for use in preparing reports are included in appendices.

Part 3 of the Handbook provides details of what is required in preparation for and the conduct of external reviews. These processes relate to applications for approval and accreditation of a new institution, the accreditation and re-accreditation of programs, and institutions on a five year cycle.

Parts 1, 2 and 3 of the Handbook should be read in conjunction with two other key documents, a *National Qualifications Framework* setting out the learning expectations and credit requirements for levels of academic awards and two documents setting out standards for accreditation. The standards deal with eleven areas of activity in higher education institutions. The primary standards documents are *Standards for Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions* and *Standards for Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Higher Education Programs*. Both of these are accompanied by companion documents providing self-evaluation scales for assessment of performance in relation to the standards. Statements of standards for special situations are being progressively developed. These include programs offered by distance education, and standards for technical training for use with technical training programs in community colleges established by universities. Supplementary documents dealing with other special issues relevant to distance education and to programs in different special fields are in preparation. Separate statements of standards for technical training will also be provided. These documents explain the standards expected by the Commission and are intended to serve as important guides for continuing improvements in quality.

CHAPTER 1

Administration of Quality Assurance Processes

The organizational arrangements procedures outlined in this chapter have been found to be effective in higher education institutions in many parts of the world. They should be implemented in flexible ways that take account of the differing size and complexity of institutions and the nature of programs offered. New and different strategies are encouraged, and the quality system itself should be reviewed and improved as part of an institution's quality assurance process. Innovative ideas consistent with what is generally considered good practice and planned with the goal of improving quality in all aspects of an institution's activities are encouraged.

Committed support and encouragement from the most senior levels of an institution are essential pre-requisites for an effective quality assurance system. This should include a commitment of support from the senior policy making body (a Council, board of trustees, or a board of governors or equivalent body), leadership from the head of the institution (the Rector or Dean), and adequate support for the costs and services required for an effective quality assurance system. However, high quality cannot be achieved by the actions of leaders alone. A commitment to quality must be shared throughout the institution, with individual members of teaching and other staff, and organizational units throughout the institution, evaluating their own performance, doing their best to improve, and contributing cooperatively with others to institutional improvement as valued members of the institutional team.

1.1 Quality Assurance, Provisional and Full Accreditation

Quality assurance is primarily an internal responsibility and depends very heavily on the commitment and support of all of those involved in administration, management, and teaching in an institution. The procedures and standards outlined by the National Commission for Academic Accreditation and Assessment are based on an expectation that institutions will accept that responsibility and take appropriate action to ensure high quality is achieved. The information provided in this Handbook is intended to guide and support those processes.

However the importance of the higher education system for students, their families, and the wider community is such that quality cannot simply be assumed. It must be verified by independent processes that can give confidence to everyone concerned that high levels of quality are being achieved. The accreditation processes for higher education institutions and the programs they offer provide this verification.

Accreditation can be granted at two stages.

First when an institution or a new program is planned provisional accreditation can be granted. Provisional accreditation is based on the plans for the institution or for the delivery of the program concerned. It is only provisional because the quality of what is done will depend on the implementation of those plans. However if an institution or a program has been provisionally accredited those responsible for providing resources, the

students who enroll and their families, and employers who may have to rely on the skills of the graduates they employ can proceed with confidence.

For an institution to be provisionally accredited the plans for its establishment must be presented in sufficient detail for the NCAAA to have confidence that all the requirements for quality assurance that are described in the following sections will be met, and that sufficient resources, including staffing, facilities and equipment will be available as the institution progresses through its early stages of development. The implementation of the quality assurance processes and the provision of these resources will be monitored and plans must be implemented if the provisional accreditation is to be retained.

For a program to be provisionally accredited the details of the program must be provided. These plans must provide much more than a simple description of the program course structure and content. The plans must include how the courses will be taught and students' learning evaluated. They must include the learning resources to be provided including library and IT provisions, staffing, facilities and equipment and other requirements and a schedule of when these resources will be available for staff and students. The plans must include the introduction of the processes that will be expected when the program will be considered for full accreditation as described later in this Handbook.

Second, when the first group of students has completed the program and the plans have been fully implemented the institution and its programs can be granted full accreditation. This is official certification by the NCAAA that its standards have been achieved. After that there is a further independent evaluation by the NCAAA once every five years to certify that the institution and its programs are keeping up to date with developments and quality is being maintained. The processes followed by the institution itself and the review procedures for accreditation are described in detail below and in Part 3 of this Handbook.

The processes described in this Handbook for a five yearly periodic self study apply to both periodic evaluations by the institution or a program for its own improvement and as preparations for an external review for full accreditation or re-accreditation.

1.2 Criteria for Quality Evaluations

Evaluations of quality involve judgments about two main elements, the extent to which goals and objectives are achieved, and consistency with generally accepted standards of performance in higher education.

The goals and objectives should be based on a clearly defined mission that is appropriate for an institution of its kind and circumstances. The mission, and the goals and objectives derived from it are for an institution to determine. However some criteria for an evaluation of the mission are included in the standards specified by the Commission.

The generally accepted standards defined by the Commission in eleven broad areas of activity relate to inputs (the level and quality of resources available) processes followed, and outcomes or results achieved. In each case the judgments about quality are not just about whether a resource is available, a process followed or an outcome achieved, but

also about how good these are compared with standards of performance at other good quality institutions of similar kind. Consequently it is necessary to identify institutions with which comparisons on important matters can be made and make arrangements for collecting (or sharing) information so this can be done. The levels of performance identified in this way are benchmarks to be used in setting performance objectives.

The Commission has identified a number of important items as Key Performance Indicators and will be collecting information from institutions relating to these indicators. See ATTACHMENT 2 to this Handbook. When this is done the Commission intends to aggregate the data so that national figures on these items are available and can serve as benchmarks. Other benchmarks should also be established by institutions, dealing with matters that are important to them in their own quality improvement strategies. These benchmarks can be based on institutions within Saudi Arabia or in other countries. However because an important objective for Saudi Arabia is to demonstrate standards equal to good international standards, at least some of the important benchmarks should be based on performance at good international institutions.

1.3 Quality Planning and Review Cycle

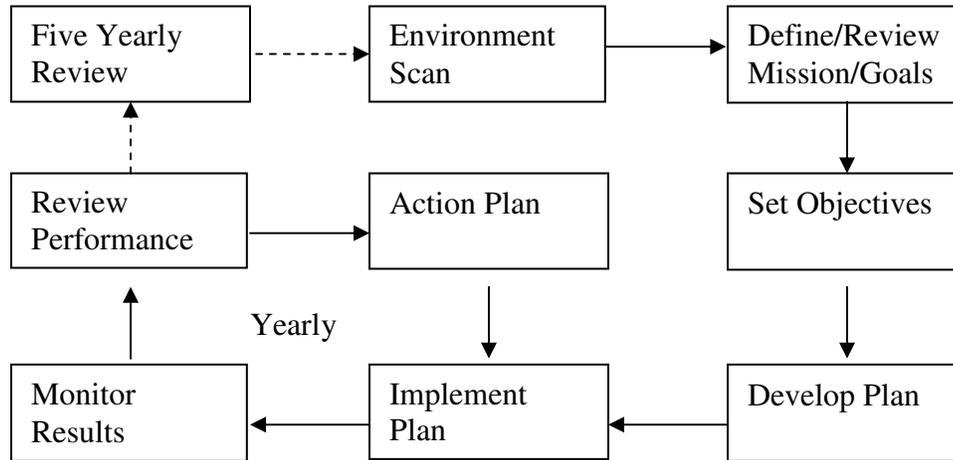
The process of improving quality involves assessing current levels of performance and the environment in which the institution is operating, identifying strategic priorities for improvement and setting objectives, developing plans, implementing those plans, monitoring what happens and making adjustments if necessary, and finally assessing the results achieved. These steps involve a repeating cycle of planning and review. Major plans may involve a sequence of activities over a number of years, with a number of steps to be taken and results of each step assessed at stages within that longer term plan.

While the monitoring should be continuing, there are normally two time periods when more formal assessments take place, one annual as performance is monitored and adjustments made as required, and one on a longer term cycle in which major reviews are undertaken on a periodic basis. For issues relating to quality assurance and accreditation periodic assessments should be planned to coincide with the five-yearly external reviews for accreditation and re-accreditation conducted by the Commission.

Although this planning and review cycle is presented as a set of steps in a linear sequence with set timelines, in practice steps may be repeated or changed in a flexible way in response to feedback and changing circumstances. For example, a review of performance may lead to a conclusion that objectives need to be redefined and a new plan for development prepared.

In considering these phases it should be recognized that they relate to a number of different levels of activity within an institution—to the institution as a whole, to academic and administrative units within it, and to individual programs or groups of programs managed by a department or college.

Planning and Review Cycle



When applied to planning for quality improvement some of the steps in this planning cycle have special meaning. For example, the scan of the internal and external environment at the initial stage should include a thorough assessment of current quality of performance and an analysis of constraints and opportunities for development. A SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) can be a useful planning tool at this stage.

A major development strategy will normally be phased in over a period of years with implementation, monitoring and adjustments through action plans on an annual basis.

It is important to periodically step back and carry out a thorough review of the relevance and effectiveness of an institution's and to periodically review the appropriateness and effectiveness of a program.

A periodic self study of an institution should be comprehensive, and include a re-examination of the environment in which the institution is operating and any implications of changes or expected developments for the institution's activities. A periodic self study of a program should consider all aspects of the program delivery and supporting infrastructure, and the quality of learning by students. In any periodic self study a report should be prepared that includes an analysis of variations in original plans that may have occurred over the period, evaluations of the degree of success in achieving objectives, assessments of strengths and weaknesses that need to be addressed in future planning, and plans for responses to those assessments.

The primary purpose of a periodic self study is to support the institution's own efforts at improvement, but reports developed are also used as a basis for the external reviews by the Commission for re-accreditation. For this purpose there are some specific requirements and these are set out in Part 3 of this Handbook which deals with the external review processes.

1.4 Organizational Arrangements

1.4.1 Appointment of a Quality Director

A senior person responsible to the Rector or Dean or a senior Vice Rector should be appointed to lead the institution's quality assurance arrangements. The level of the appointment and the title used for the position will depend on the size and complexity of the institution but the person appointed should have sufficient seniority to provide effective leadership within the total institution and ensure compliance with institutional quality assurance arrangements.

1.4.2 Establishment of a Quality Center

An organizational unit, commonly called a quality center, should be established within the institution's central administration. The unit or center should be directly responsible to the quality director referred to above and assist in coordinating institution-wide quality assurance activities.

1.4.3 Responsibilities of a Quality Center

Particular tasks should include matters such as:

- advising on institution-wide priorities and strategies for quality improvement;
- assisting internal academic and administrative units in the development of quality improvement strategies within their own areas;
- establishing and monitoring self-assessment processes and reporting requirements;
- providing training for faculty and staff in the institution together with advice and support as required;
- developing a procedures manual describing the institution's structure and processes for quality assurance; specifying criteria for selection and formats for indicators, benchmarks, and objectives; preparing standard forms for matters such as student and graduate surveys; and advising on operational procedures for the planning and implementation of quality processes;
- maintaining systematic collections of reports on performance including data on indicators and benchmarks that will be required for analysis and reporting on trends in performance and changes in the environment within which the institution is operating;
- coordinating and leading the preparation of periodic self studies for consideration within the institution and for use in external reviews.

A separate document suggesting the roles and responsibilities of a center of this kind has been prepared by the Commission.

1.4.4 Formation of a Quality Committee

A quality committee should be established with membership from all major academic and administrative units including both colleges and other functional areas, to work with the

quality center in planning and carrying out responsibilities for quality assurance. A senior administrator such as an academic Vice Rector would normally chair the committee and work closely with the director of the quality center in leading and supporting the institutions quality assurance activities. The members of the committee should be informed about and committed to quality assurance and have capacity to provide leadership within their own areas of activity in the implementation of quality assurance processes.

1.4.5 Cross-Institutional Involvement in Quality Assurance

All organizational and administrative units should be involved in quality assurance, with performance monitored and plans for improvement made and implemented. Summary reports need to be prepared regularly so the institution's senior management and governing body are aware of what is occurring. These regular reports do not need to be large or complicated, but should include key performance indicators relating to the most important objectives, and an indication of whether the short term results on operational plans conform to what is required if the longer term strategic plans and objectives are to be achieved.

In many cases it has proved valuable to appoint quality assurance officers, establish a small quality unit and form sub-committees within colleges or large departments, or other organizational units (e.g. libraries, and major administrative departments) to consider the programs and services they offer and provide assistance with quality improvement. It is extremely important that any units or committees of this kind cooperate closely with an institutional quality center and support any institution-wide quality improvement initiatives. The existence of units of this sort within colleges and other organizational units can give credibility to quality initiatives for faculty and staff who identify closely with their special academic field or area of activity and help to provide specialized assistance and resources or arrange training programs that deal with particular issues found in that area.

1.4.6 Monitoring Performance

There should be an assessment of performance by academic and administrative units at least once per year. This need not be a major task, for example it could be simply a brief analysis of performance in relation to selected items from the self evaluation scales, a check on progress made in implementation of plans for development, and consideration of data on certain selected performance indicators. The choice of indicators will depend on the area of activity and the nature of the plan, but they should be things that allow progress to be monitored annually even though a plan may take several years to complete the analysis should include details of any adjustments that should be made in planning or corrective action required.

Templates have been developed by the Commission for this annual reporting on courses and programs. However this has not been done for other administrative and organizational units because what is needed in this analysis will vary widely for different functions. Whatever format is used for this analysis and reporting there should be some formality in requirements for analysis and reports to prevent the assessment being overlooked. The reports should be prepared by those responsible for particular functions. If administration of a function is distributed to different parts of an institution, selected

items of information should be provided from each distributed section so the overall quality of performance for that function can be monitored.

The Rector or Dean, and other senior administrators should be aware of the goals and objectives of organizational units, the outcomes of their self evaluations and of the priorities for improvement on the part of those delivering services. Consequently brief reports should be prepared for them and for any institutional committees with responsibility for overseeing the function concerned.

Comprehensive self-studies followed by external reviews by the Commission will occur every five years. This time period is too long to go without some general review of performance. Consequently there should be an internal review comparable to the preliminary self-evaluation during this period. A two or three year period would be the norm, but the time could be longer or shorter depending on the circumstances of the institution, and it may vary for different activities within the institution. Like the initial step, the rating scales from the Self Evaluation Scales for Higher Education Institutions should be used, together with relevant surveys and other sources of information. Indicators should be selected, results reported on, and plans for improvement reconsidered as for the initial self-assessment.

1.5 Initial Quality Planning and Evaluation

1.5.1 Initial Quality Planning for a New Institution

(A new institution built on the foundation of an existing institution or formed by the merger of two or more existing institutions should follow the steps outlined below for existing institutions)

In a totally new institution the plans for a quality assurance system should be prepared as an integral part of the general planning for the institution. These plans should be included with documentation submitted to the Commission for provisional accreditation at the time the planners of the institution submit their plans to establish the institution to the Ministry of Higher Education for its approval

Details of requirements for provisional accreditation and documents that must be provided to the Commission for this purpose are included in Chapter 1 and ATTACHMENTS 2, 3, and 4 of Part 3 of this Handbook.

1.5.2 Initial Quality Planning for an Existing Institution

As noted above, these processes should be followed for any existing campus or campuses as part of initial quality planning for a new institution that includes them.

There are two major tasks involved in initial quality planning for an existing institution. One of these is to establish a quality center and introduce systems to meet the quality assurance and accreditation requirements of the Commission. The second is to conduct an initial self evaluation, identify strengths and weaknesses in quality provision, and develop strategies for improvement.

The recommended first step is to establish a quality center and a quality committee as described above, and to use that center and committee in arranging the self evaluation and developing a strategy for progressively implementing quality assurance requirements.

For an existing campus or campuses that are being incorporated into a new institution a committee should be established and staff appointed to lead a self evaluation of activities at the existing campus. Any improvements required should be incorporated into the planning arrangements for the new institution.

As noted above the Commission has developed a set of Key Performance Indicators for use in evaluating quality (see ATTACHMENT 2) and data on these KPIs should be consistently obtained and used as evidence for quality assurance. However each institution should add additional KPIs that are appropriate for its own mission and objectives, specify clearly the data requirements for them, and include these in its own evaluations as well.

1.5.3 Carrying Out an Initial Self Evaluation

The first stage in the process for each unit should be a frank assessment of existing performance.

The scope of the initial evaluation should be comprehensive. It should deal with programs in all areas, and with facilities, equipment, services and administrative processes.

The rating scales in the *Self Evaluation Scales for Higher Education Institutions* should be used. These scales are likely to indicate that some are done very well, some things are not done, and some are done poorly. The information about current levels of performance will provide a benchmark against which future improvements can be assessed.

Preparations

All members of faculty and other staff should be informed about the initial self-evaluation and their cooperation sought for the processes to be followed.

The announcement should explain the main reasons why the evaluation is taking place as a basis for developing plans for quality improvement and accreditation and why that is important. Reasons would normally include benefits for students and faculty and other staff at the institution, for the wider community, and for national development. Information should be given about the processes to be used and opportunities for individuals to have input. This communication should emphasize that the objective is not to find fault or to criticize, but rather to provide a realistic basis for plans for improvement.

A senior member of staff of the institution should be appointed to lead the process working with the assistance of a quality center. A planning or steering committee should be established chaired by the person appointed to lead the process. This steering

committee could be an existing quality committee, or a special committee could be appointed for this particular task.

The committee should prepare a strategy for carrying out the evaluation. This will normally involve appointment of sub-committees to carry out particular tasks related to the 11 standards identified by the Commission. Different procedures may be appropriate for different functions or organizational units within the institution.

1.5.4 Managing the Self Evaluation

Sub-committees should investigate and provide information and reports on one or more standards using the *Self Evaluation Scales for Higher Education Institutions*. The sub-committees should include representation from units responsible for functions considered users of the service provided, and wherever possible someone independent of that function to ensure some independence and objectivity in the judgments made. Students should be included in sub-committees where appropriate.

The sub-committees should consult with those responsible for the function they are considering and with users of those services, and consider any evidence of quality that is available including documents, surveys, and statistical data such as information from the student record system. They should complete the self evaluation scales using the starring system described, and indicate priorities for improvement where relevant.

Although some of the groupings of statements of good practice may coincide with the administrative responsibility of academic or organizational units, others will not, and this will vary for different institutions. This means that in completing scales from the Self Evaluation Scales for Higher Education Institutions for these functions it may be necessary to gather information from both the central units and other parts of the institution providing similar services.

This requirement to obtain information from different parts of an institution has particular relevance to programs, which are offered by colleges and departments throughout the institution. The quality of programs is a major issue in any educational institution. However there may be many programs and this could be a very large task. It is recommended that evaluations be done within each department with results consolidated at the level of colleges before being brought together for a summary evaluation in the total institution report. The summary evaluation should not be an “average” response for all programs, but one that identifies both common elements and significant variations. This approach should also be used in considering possible differences between sections for male and female students.

The self evaluation scales are intended to draw attention to processes and evaluative data that are needed, and to help identify priorities for improvement. It is not expected at this initial stage that an institution would satisfy all of these standards or follow all the processes that are included in the self evaluation scales. It is also likely that for a number of items valid evidence will not be available and benchmarks will not have been established. Because of this reliance will have to be placed on opinions and limited data. If relevant evidence is not available, that in itself is a quality matter that should be stated

clearly in reports prepared. Providing for the gathering of such evidence should be considered in suggesting priorities for improvement.

Opportunities should be provided for stakeholders or members of the university community, including users of various services, who are not directly involved in the process to provide comments and advice. Submissions or presentations of this sort should be acknowledged, and should be considered carefully by those preparing reports.

Report on an Initial Self Evaluation

A report should be prepared on the outcomes of the evaluation, indicating the processes followed in conducting the evaluation, the conclusions reached, identifying areas of particular strength or requiring attention, and summarizing the evidence on which those conclusions were based. Reports by sub committees or working parties should be attached and summaries of their procedures and conclusions incorporated into a single document.

The report should include recommendations about matters that are considered of highest priority in a plan for quality improvement.

Suggested Structure for an Initial Self-Study Report

Executive summary of the self-study processes used and the major conclusions reached.

Process followed in conducting the self evaluation including the plan for conducting the self study, membership and major responsibilities of committee and any sub-committees, processes for consultation, and major sources of evidence of quality used.

Report on each of the eleven standards indicating for each standard the process followed by the sub-committee, sources of evidence and major conclusions including priorities for improvement.

Concluding statement summarize major conclusions and priorities for action that may be required for improving quality. This should take account of both the reports on quality in relation to each of the standards and the mission and strategic goals for development of the institution.

1.6 Developing a Strategic Plan for Quality Improvement

As noted above a plan for quality improvement should include two major elements, planning to progressively implement arrangements to meet accreditation requirements for quality assurance if these are not already in place, and planning to deal with any problems identified in an initial self evaluation.

In an institution implementing quality assurance processes for the first time involvement in quality assurance processes by different organizational and administrative units may need to be phased in as experience is gained and faculty and staff become more confident about the processes involved. (See suggestions in ATTACHMENT 1)

1.6.1 Quality Assurance Requirements for Accreditation

The timing for introduction of these requirements will vary in response to the experience and circumstances of different institutions and the extent to which these arrangements are already in place. Subject to these variations, the following requirements should be met.

- Establishment of a quality center, appointment of a director for the center and appointment of a quality committee chaired by a senior member of the institution's administration. (This has already been done in most institutions)
- Establishment of arrangements for quality assurance in each major organizational unit within the institution (for example, colleges or departments, deanship of research, organizations responsible for financial affairs, facilities and equipment etc). What is needed will vary according to the size and functions of organizational units. However the arrangements will usually involve appointing an individual as a quality officer and establishing a committee to provide coordination, leadership and advice on what should be done within the unit.
- Preparation of program specifications and course specifications for each program. In most cases this is likely to be a staged process with action taken initially in selected departments and progressively extended to others.

The development of these program specifications will need to include checking for consistency with the *National Qualifications Framework* developed by the Commission, and for meeting accreditation standards in professional fields. (As an interim arrangement, consideration should be given to standards defined by international specialist accreditors pending development of standards for professional fields in Saudi Arabia).

Introduction of student evaluations of courses and programs

Introduction of course and program reports using the templates developed by the Commission. As for the program and course specifications, this will usually be done progressively for different departments.

Specification of performance indicators to provide evidence of quality in various areas of activity

Appropriate indicators should be specified for each major organizational unit, and selected key performance indicators specified for functions (such as educational programs) that are carried out in different parts of the institution. (See note below on Key Performance Indicators identified by the Commission).

Identification of performance benchmarks for assessment of quality relating to the main quality indicators specified

Benchmarks could involve either past performance or comparisons with other institutions, but should include at least some appropriate external comparisons.

Identification of relevant statistical information to provide evidence of quality of performance and establishment of arrangements for that information to be routinely provided to those who need it for their evaluation and planning activities

Provision of training programs for faculty and staff in matters relevant to the improvement of quality

1.6.2 Other Priorities for Improvement following an Initial self evaluation.

It is likely that a number of issues identified in an initial self-evaluation will be addressed through the introduction of the quality processes described above. Others will require special attention through appropriate strategies for improvement.

In some cases, action will be needed on “the institution as a whole” basis to deal with any general problems or concerns affecting the institution as a whole. In other cases action may be needed within individual organizational units or sections of the institution to deal with issues and concerns that have been identified there. The institutional strategic plan for quality improvement will give attention to issues affecting all or most parts of the institution but should also provide support for local internal initiatives where required. Internal organizational units would be expected to develop plans that complement the institutional plan and also deal with specific issues relating to their particular area of activity.

1.6.3 Dealing with Uncertainties About Future Funding

Plans for improvement, whether supported from existing resources or extra funding, should have specific objectives, with timelines set and indicators of progress towards those objectives decided upon. These would normally be developed at two levels, strategic plans for development over a medium time period such as five years, and annual operational plans with specific objectives that contribute to the staged development of the strategic goals and objectives over time.

The longer term plans may need to involve assumptions about the resources that will be available since funding will normally be allocated to institutions over shorter periods. Plans should include risk assessments dealing with this funding issue as well as other possible concerns applicable to different development strategies, and adjustments may need to be made in the light of later developments. Uncertainty about future funding is common to educational institutions and cannot be allowed to prevent effective long term planning.

1.6.4 Relationship of a Strategic Plan for Quality Improvement to General Strategic Planning

At the initial stage of preparing for the introduction of a quality assurance system, assessing current levels of quality and planning for quality improvement, a strategic plan for quality improvement might be prepared as a separate activity. However, it really represents one important element in a broader strategic plan for the institution that might include such things as financial matters, development of facilities, introduction of new

fields of study and so on, each of which would be represented in broad goals for development and with objectives and appropriate strategies for achievement. Consequently the plan for quality improvement should be seen as one important component of a broader strategic plan, with goals defined and objectives established, and strategies for implementation described in a way that is comparable to other strategic planning priorities.

1.7 Other Issues

Additional comments are made on some issues that have been raised by institutions or that have been identified as matters of concern in institutional and program reviews.

1.7.1 Relationships Between Sections for Male and Female Students

Organizational difficulties can arise because of difficulties in communication between sections for male and female students. Arrangements must conform to cultural norms in the Kingdom. However these do not prevent full participation on committees and sub committees by female members of faculty and staff using appropriate means of communication.

Variations in quality can occur for a number of understandable reasons including difficulties in recruiting appropriately qualified staff, recent development of a section of a campus, or extension of a program with resources still to be fully provided. Variations such as these must be expected and will cause no difficulty in a review for accreditation provided they are recognized and acknowledged and appropriate strategies are in place to overcome the problems. The objective must be to provide services and resources of equal quality, and to achieve equal standards of learning outcomes of for all students and, if this is not the case for particular reasons on a short term basis, action must have been initiated to overcome the problems as quickly as possible.

With respect to standards required for accreditation:

An institution with sections for male and female students is one institution and the standards apply to the institution as a whole.

A program offered in different sections for male and female students is one program and the standards apply to the program as a whole.

This does not mean that any assessment for either the institution or a program is “averaged” across the two sections. Information about quality must be collected in common form for each section in any quality report (annual report or periodic self study), then combined into a single report that identifies any common strengths or weaknesses and any significant variations. If there are any significant variations in quality between the sections the report should acknowledge this and include plans for responding constructively to the problems found.

The requirement to combine information from different sections means that information must be collected in similar form using comparable standards of judgment. To help ensure that this can occur, both sections should participate on steering committees and

subcommittees, and be involved in planning surveys and data collection including the selection of quantifiable performance indicators.

1.7.2 Reporting on Programs in an Institutional Evaluation.

Institutional evaluations and reports must include educational programs. They are the core function of the institution. However, the way this is done is a little different from other functions because there are other thorough processes for the evaluation of each program and each of the courses included in them.

What is needed in relation to programs in an institutional evaluation and report is an overview of all of the programs, something that is not provided for in the individual program reviews. The process is essentially one of combining certain selected information about all the programs and reporting on the overall result and significant variations from it. In situations where a number of programs are managed by departments or colleges this should be a two-stage process with combinations at college level initially, and then further consolidation for the institution as a whole.

At the initial stage as described above for institutional self assessments, the rating scales for Learning and Teaching should be completed for all programs (though how and when this is done must be carefully considered as part of an implementation strategy). These scales might be supplemented by other information available for all programs such as program completion rates, or by student ratings of the quality of their programs. The scales can then be aggregated, (for a college, or for the institution depending on the size of the institution) and significant variations in the ratings noted. Some suggestions for combining ratings in this way are included in the section on combining assessments below.

The planning process should allow for an appropriate balance of local flexibility and overall coordination. The requirements for effective learning and the environment affecting programs, varies for different fields of study. It is entirely appropriate for colleges (and programs) to have different priorities and there should be scope in planning for these priorities to be addressed.

However, because of the importance of learning and teaching as the central task of an educational institution, it is likely that one of the major goals and strategic plans for the institution will focus on the development and improvement of programs across the institution. Annual operational plans would also normally be prepared for the institution's programs generally.

This means that, as well as providing for developments that departments and colleges require for their particular sphere of activity, there must also be scope for total institutional priorities and for policies established for programs throughout the institution. This should be done if general institutional policies are established for programs, or if any general weaknesses are found in all or most programs.

It is generally regarded as good practice for an institution to decide on certain characteristics (or attributes) of graduates that it wants to develop, and for action to be taken in all programs to develop those characteristics. For example, an institution may

decide as an overall institutional policy that its graduates should be particularly skilled in information and communications technology or that they should be particularly good at applying their learning in creative problem solving. If this is done, attention should be given to these outcomes in all programs in addition to the outcomes sought in particular courses of study. Indicators of achievement relating to these special institutional student attributes should be developed and used throughout the institution.

While a lot of detail is needed for the annual reporting and planning within individual programs, this is not needed at the institutional level and would be unmanageable for an institution as a whole. Consequently a small number of key performance indicators should be selected for reporting within the institutional monitoring process. The indicators may vary according to institutional mission and priorities, but should always include progress towards total institutional policy initiatives for programs and some general measures of quality of outcomes and processes that are directly related to them.

Some possible examples are:

- Current statistics and trends in student progression and completion rates;
- Current statistics and trends in student assessments of teaching or quality of programs;
- Data on graduate employment outcomes;
- Extent of staff involvement in professional development activities relating to teaching quality;
- Number and proportion of program reports that comply with requirements that are completed by a specified date.

The indicators selected should include the Key Performance Indicators required by the NCAAA, and also others needed for the institution's own policy objectives and quality improvement strategies.

1.7.3 Developing an Institutional Overview for Functions that are Decentralized

Quality assurance processes should be followed within all academic and administrative units in an institution. Where a unit provides services for the total institution, as is often the case for central administrative functions, the evaluation and reporting of unit and institutional performance are relatively straight forward, though it is important to include the perspectives of the recipients of the services as well as those of the providers.

When functions are decentralized and managed by different academic and administrative units, the evaluation and reporting processes should be followed in each unit and also consolidated to provide an overall picture of the quality of that function for the institution as a whole. For example, if some library facilities are managed within colleges it would be appropriate to consider the effectiveness of the library function within each college as part of the college's quality evaluation, and also to develop an overview of the quality of library provision for the institution as a whole, including both the central library and

provisions within the colleges. The rating scales in the *Self Evaluation Scales for Higher Education Institutions* are intended to help with this process.

The planning and delivery of educational programs is an obvious example of the same relationship. Quality assurance processes must of course be carried out at the level of courses and programs, and considered at the level of the academic departments or colleges within which they are managed. Provision at the level of programs will be the primary focus for program accreditation judgments. However, there also needs to be overall institutional consideration of the quality of its programs as a whole, and capacity to identify areas within the institution where improvements may be required.

In some cases educational support functions will be carried out within departments or colleges, and reports should be provided to those departments of colleges in the first instance. In other cases functions may be managed centrally for the total institution and the reports on those activities would be provided to the institution's central administration. There are also other functions where there is a combination of central administration and decentralization, with services provided locally within colleges or departments as well as centrally. Library services are sometimes managed in this way with a central library and branch libraries in at least some colleges. However these functions are organized, it should be possible for the overall quality of the function within the institution to be monitored by those with ultimate responsibility—the institution's senior management and governing board.

If a particular function is managed centrally as a service to the total institution evaluations need only be done once. However it is essential that the evaluations provide for input from the full range of stakeholders across the institution. (The management of buildings and grounds might be an example of such an activity)

If a particular function is fully or partly decentralized and managed by a number of different sections within the institution, the quality of provision of that function should be evaluated by those involved within each of those sections, but it must be also be possible for information to be consolidated to provide an overall picture for that function for the whole institution, in a way that identifies areas within the institution where there are particular strengths, or weaknesses that may require special attention.

The *Self Evaluation Scales for Higher Education Institutions* describes standards and rating scales in eleven areas of activity. The use of these scales should make it possible to aggregate assessments for the institution as a whole, and at the same time to identify organizational units within the institution where there are significant variations from the overall level of performance. For example:

(a) Where a function is managed once for the institution as a whole (possible example: Governance);

It should be possible to use the rating scales for this function once in a single assessment for the total institution.

(b) Where a function is decentralized and managed in different organizational units throughout the institution (possible example: Learning and Teaching);

Ratings on Learning and Teaching Scales	College or Program 1	College or Program 2	College or Program 3	Etc.	Total Institution
4.1 Student Learning Outcomes	xxx	xxxx	xx		xxx
4.2 Educational Assistance for Students	xxxx	xxxx	xxx		xxxx
4.3 Quality of Teaching	xxx	xxxx	xx		xxx
4.4 Support for Improvements in Teaching	xx	xxx	xx		xx
4.5 Etc.					
Overall Assessment	xxx	xxxx	xx		xxx

In this example there is considerable variation between the evaluations for different parts of the institution. The overall assessment is much less important than the variations and it is those that should receive most attention. College or Program 2 seems to be functioning fairly well, though there is room for improvement. However College or Program 3 appears to be having difficulties. The ratings for Student Learning Outcomes, Quality of Teaching and Support for Improvements in Quality of Teaching are all low and the information suggests that some action is needed in this College or Program to improve this set of related items. There may also be a case for developing a general institution wide strategy to improve what is done to support improvements in teaching which seems to be a general weakness for the institution as a whole.

C. Where a function is partly managed centrally and partly decentralized to different organizational units (possible example: Learning Resources).

Ratings on Learning Resources	Central Library	College or Program 1	College or Program 2	Etc.	Total Institution
6.1 Planning and Evaluation	xxx	xxx	xx		xxx
6.2 Organization	xxxx	xxxx	xxxx		xxxx
6.3 Support for Users	xxxx	xxx	xx		xxx
6.4 Resources	xxxx	xxx	xx		xxx
Overall Assessment	xxxx	xxx	xx		xxx

In this example also the details seem more significant for planning for quality improvement than the overall result. The overall assessments and the total institutional ratings seem satisfactory, but there are problems in College or Program 2 that seem to require action.

1.7.4 Relationships with Community Colleges

A number of universities have established community colleges that offer programs of one or two year's duration leading to the award of a diploma or associate degree. These awards can be accepted as legitimate qualifications for employment in various areas of

activity, or in many cases, can be recognized for credit towards a bachelor's degree program at the parent institution.

The accreditation and quality assurance arrangements for these colleges must be considered from several different perspectives.

The perspective of the university which must accept ultimate responsibility for all of its activities

It must have appropriate oversight of the College's activities while allowing the degree of independence and flexibility necessary for its effective operations.

The perspective of the college itself which must meet appropriate quality standards in its administrative and service provision

The perspective of the programs offered by the college which must meet relevant quality standards for the type and level of program concerned

The accreditation requirements for a university require that it establishes arrangements to ensure the activities of its community colleges are of high quality. This means that appropriate quality assurance arrangements must be in place, and the effectiveness of these arrangements will be evaluated in the university's external review for accreditation. The relationship is roughly comparable to that with particular programs in the institution. While an individual program may be considered for accreditation, accreditation of the institution will consider adequacy of the institution's oversight of its programs and their overall quality.

Programs offered by a community college may be technical training programs designed to provide the specific skills required for employment in particular industries, or may be higher education in nature designed to provide more general preparation for employment or further study in a higher education environment. The standards expected for these types of programs are significantly different and the distinctions are extremely important. A community college could offer both types of program, but each program must be clearly identified as falling into one category or the other. Standards for both types of programs are available from the NCAA and the appropriate group of standards must be used in the community college's quality assurance system.

1.7.5 Preparatory or Foundation Year Programs

A number of higher education institutions have introduced preparatory or foundation programs to ensure that students are adequately prepared for higher education studies.

In some cases courses that had previously been offered as part of a degree programs have been relocated to the foundation or preparatory year, making it possible to replace them with more advanced studies to keep up to date with new developments in their field. In other cases the higher education degree program has been reduced in length as a result of the relocation of the general introductory courses to the foundation or preparatory year.

In addition to these program changes some institutions have arranged for the delivery of the preparatory or foundation studies to be outsourced to another provider with particular expertise in the studies provided.

If these arrangements are properly managed they offer the possibility of significantly improving the efficiency and effectiveness of higher education programs. However, there are also dangers that have to be considered and some conditions that need to be satisfied.

Foundation or preparatory studies precede and are not part of a higher education program. They provide the knowledge and skills expected of students before they begin their higher education program. Examples include—general studies to overcome deficiencies in a secondary education program, English language studies in preparation for courses that will be taught in English, completion of studies in subjects specified as prerequisites for certain fields of study such as mathematics, training in independent study skills or use of IT for students before they begin university studies that require those skills.

A consequence of this is that a bachelor degree program must still meet MHE requirements for a minimum number of credit hours and number of semesters in higher education studies for the kind of program concerned after completion of a foundation or preparatory program. A program must also meet NCAAA accreditation requirements - a bachelor degree program must include at least 120 credit hours with not more than 18 credit hours recognized in any one semester.

If an institution out-sources provision of a foundation or preparatory program to another provider, the institution must provide effective oversight and quality assurance of what is done. The institution will be held accountable for all aspects of the program, including safety and security for students and the quality of education provided. Failure to maintain the quality of an outsourced program will affect the accreditation of the institution.

1.7.6 External or Remote Campuses

A number of universities have established campuses in other locations or in some cases have acquired such campuses as a result of restructuring by the Ministry of Higher Education.

The quality of these campuses and the programs they offer are the responsibility of the university to which they belong and their quality and the university's systems for ensuring it is maintained will be considered in that university's assessment for accreditation.

Self evaluation processes including the completion of self evaluation scales should be carried out for all campuses with information retained for each campus as well as combined in a general institutional report that identifies any significant differences between campuses. Quality improvement plans should include action to deal with any problems found.

Programs offered on external, or remote campuses are assumed to be the same programs as those carrying the same title offered elsewhere in the institution. This means that the standards of student achievement must be comparable and there must be some appropriate mechanisms for ensuring that this is the case. While some specific course requirements may differ with elective courses or tracks appropriate for the students enrolled in different locations, these should be treated as equivalent to the alternatives normally available within a normal on-campus program. It is expected that there may be some variations in facilities, equipment and staffing provisions in the different locations; however, the quality standards specified by the NCAA must be met in every location.

There are some special considerations that should be kept in mind.

During a period of restructuring in the higher education system some time must be allowed for administrative and quality assurance arrangements to be put in place. If a campus has been acquired by a university through a merger within the previous two years the university will not be held to account for the quality assurance arrangements in that campus in a review for accreditation. However, it will be expected to have reviewed the quality of all elements of the quality of that campus including programs offered there as part of its self evaluation and to have developed strategies for dealing with any weaknesses or problems that were identified.

If a campus is established in another country, it will be required to comply with any regulations established in the country where it is located. This may lead to some variations in specific processes followed. However, the standards specified by the NCAA must still be met at that campus except where specifically in conflict with local regulations. Where such conflicts exist alternative mechanisms must be in place to ensure equivalent standards are maintained.

In all cases the academic awards carry the title of the university and their quality directly affects the university's reputation. Consequently the standard of learning outcomes for students must be equivalent to the standards of learning expected for similar programs at the parent university and there must be appropriate mechanisms in place to ensure that this is the case.

1.7.7 Distance Education Programs

Distance education programs offer an alternative mode of flexible delivery that makes them accessible to students who might not otherwise be able to undertake programs. In addition, many institutions offer students the opportunity to take part of a program in this mode in combination with conventional face-to-face delivery while attending an institution's major campus.

However, while these arrangements provide valuable flexibility for students and an important service to the community, there are dangers if effective quality assurance processes are not in place.

A program offered under the same title through distance education processes and through face-to-face delivery is assumed to be the same program and program accreditation processes will require that the learning outcomes and standards of student achievement

are the same. Programs offered through distance education must be approved by the senior academic committees within the institution in the same way as those offered face-to-face, and the approval and subsequent monitoring and quality assurance processes must ensure that this is the case.

Of course there are very important differences in the way programs are delivered, in facilities provided, and in arrangements for student advice and support. The particular requirements for distance education are set out in a modified set of program standards prepared by the NCAAA. These standards must be met for a program delivered by distance education, and in a program delivered by a combination of face-to-face and distance education modes. They must be met for the components of the program delivered through distance education.

An institution seeking accreditation must have in place quality assurance processes that ensure that if distance education programs are offered they meet the standards required for distance education programs with learning outcomes equivalent to what are developed in comparable on campus programs. In the conduct of a self study the distance education arrangements must be evaluated against the appropriate standards with comparable data provided for both modes of instruction in the same way as is done for programs offered in different sections (male and female, or on different campuses)

The Ministry of Higher Education has published regulations for the conduct of distance education programs. Institutions that have offered distance education programs in the past were required to comply with these regulations for any new students admitted after the Fall Semester 2010, and to ensure that the new requirements are fully met in all distance education programs within five years. (i.e. by Fall Semester 2015) This allows time for adjustments to be made in arrangements for existing students who had been admitted prior to the new regulations coming into effect.

For the accreditation of an institution by the NCAAA, a comparable phasing in period has been allowed.

In addition to meeting the Ministry of Higher Education regulations for current student admissions and full implementation of its regulations by Fall 2015, the institution must have completed the self evaluation scales for distance education programs and have a strategic plan for meeting the NCAAA standards for those programs by Fall 2015. If these conditions are met, the distance education activities will be excluded from consideration in the accreditation judgments. If accreditation is granted, it will be for the institution excluding its distance education activities.

During this transition period:

A program offered entirely by distance education will not be considered for accreditation unless all the Ministry and NCAAA requirements are met.

If a program is offered through face-to-face delivery and also separately through distance education, the on campus component of the program may be considered for accreditation, but if accreditation is granted it will apply to the on campus component only.

If a program is offered in a way that allows some courses or other portions of the program to be taken by distance education, the NCAAA may agree to consider it for

accreditation provided its distance education standards are fully met for the elements of the program that can be taken by distance education.

1.8 Periodic Institutional Self Study

An institutional self-study is a comprehensive review of the quality of all aspects of an institution's activities. It is a central component of the internal quality assurance system, but also serves as the primary focus of external reviews by the Commission.

For a new institution, a periodic self-study should be carried out immediately after the graduation of the first group of students, and prior to the Commission's external review for full accreditation.

For an existing institution, a self-study should be carried out as soon as possible after its quality assurance system has been put in place and the Commission's external review for full accreditation will be conducted after that.

After these initial institutional external reviews have been carried out by the Commission, further external reviews will be conducted every five years and an institutional self-study should be undertaken in preparation for each of those reviews.

While an institutional self-study should be comprehensive and should consider the eleven specified standards as criteria for evaluation, it should have a focus relating to the institution's mission and priorities. Particular attention should be given to what had been identified as priorities for planning and development at the beginning of the review period and progress made in dealing with those priorities, and to any current priorities and activities that the governing body or the senior administration believes should be given special attention.

1.8.1 Managing the Institutional Self-Study Process

The following organizational arrangements are suggested. They assume the existence of an institutional quality unit or center with responsibility for leading, assisting, and coordinating quality assurance processes; a central quality committee chaired by a senior member of the central administration and including senior and experienced staff from major administrative units and service functions; and the identification of individuals within the major colleges or departments to assist with quality assurance processes.

A plan for an institutional self-study should be prepared by the quality center, discussed and approved by the quality committee, and adopted by the appropriate decision making mechanism within the institution. This plan should include a description in broad terms of how the self-study should be carried out, staff requirements and proposed committees and working parties, and a budget covering any additional costs. This plan should be prepared well before the proposed timing of external reviews by the Commission. The Commission will allow a minimum of 9 months for an institution to prepare for a review, but an institution may wish to initiate the process earlier than this and preparation time of at least 12 months is recommended.

Arrangements should be made with the Commission for the external institutional review. (Note that the Commission's capacity to respond to requests for particular dates will depend on the volume of activity at the time. Since the external reviews should be undertaken as soon as possible after completion of self studies, there will need to be some flexibility in the timing of the whole process.)

An announcement should be made within the institution, normally by the Rector or Dean, informing faculty and other stakeholders about the self-study and anticipated external review, and including information about opportunities to provide input. A number of sub-committees or working parties should be established to carry out the detailed analysis and planning required. Each should be chaired by a senior person knowledgeable about the area for consideration and about quality assurance processes. This could be the person responsible for the function that is being evaluated. However to provide some independence in evaluations it is generally considered preferable that for a major periodic self-study the chair of the subcommittee not be the person with administrative responsibility for the function concerned. The number and range of responsibilities of the subcommittees and working parties may vary according to requirements and priorities of the institution, but they would normally include a small steering committee drawn from among the members of the quality committee, and working parties to consider one or more of the sections in the *Standards for Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions* and the *Self Evaluation Scales for Higher Education Institutions*. The steering committee, with the assistance of the quality center, should prepare specifications or terms of reference for the work to be done by the sub-committees and working parties, including timelines, formats and templates for the provision of information and reports, guidance on procedures to be followed, and timelines for completion of major tasks.

A full briefing should be provided for the people involved on the various committees and working parties and a series of meetings scheduled for the chairs of the committees and working parties to review progress and discuss and resolve issues that may arise.

The process of review should include consideration of performance in relation to major policy objectives and completion of the rating scales in the *Self Evaluation Scales for Higher Education Institutions*. Information from surveys, focus group consultations, and examination of indicators and benchmarks should be considered. For a major self-study it is particularly important to use independent advice on aspects of the matters considered, to draw comparisons with other comparable institutions and to verify conclusions about this evidence through independent opinions. The processes of doing this should be documented.

As the committees and working parties undertake their tasks, assistance should be provided as required by the quality center. The center may help in finding appropriate persons external to the institution to provide independent comment on interpretations of evidence and conclusions drawn from it.

The reports from the various working parties and subcommittees should be brought together and reviewed by the coordinating committee with the assistance of the quality center. The information provided should be incorporated into an overall report that includes a description of the processes followed, a summary of independent external

advice received and the institutions response to that advice, and recommendations for change and improvement. The quality committee should review the draft report for consistency and appropriateness in responding to information obtained and provide comments on priorities for improvement from a strategic institution-wide perspective. Its conclusions should be incorporated into the report.

1.8.2 Matters for Inclusion in an Institutional Self-Study Report

(See template for institutional Self-Study Report in ATTACHMENT 2 (o))

Please note that it is extremely important to provide statistical data and hard evidence to support conclusions wherever possible. Opinion statements and judgments about quality based on the starring system in the self evaluation scales are useful of course, but of relatively little value in an accreditation assessment unless backed up by solid evidence wherever possible.

Institutional Profile

- A brief summary of the institution's history, scale and range of activities
- A brief description of the community (ies) where the institution is located with comments on implications for the development and programs of the institution
- Description and charts showing the management and administrative structure of the institution
- Campus locations (with maps) showing major buildings and facilities
- Faculty, staff and student numbers by department and college
- Information about previous of planned accreditations
- Summary of quality assurance arrangements
- Summary of strategic plan

Context

- Institutional Context--Brief summary description of the history and development of the institution.
- Environmental Context—Main features of the environment in which the institution is operating noting any significant changes that have occurred during the last planning period or that are expected to occur in the next.

Mission, Goals and Objectives

The mission goals and strategic quality improvement objectives established by the institution and performance on indicators and benchmarks selected to evaluate performance.

Special Focus in the Review

A statement of any particular aspects of the institution's operations to which the institution wishes to give particular attention during the self-study. These may reflect changes in the institutional or environmental context, development priorities at the

institution, responses to internal quality assessments, government policies, or other matters.

Self-Study Process

Summary description (using charts and diagrams as appropriate) of the structure and organization of the self-study process

Institutional Performance Evaluation

Discussion of performance in relation to the institutions major strategic quality objectives, considering results as shown by indicators and benchmarks, and implications of those results for future planning.

Reports should be prepared on performance in relation to each of the eleven specified standards, i.e.

1. Mission and Objectives.
2. Governance and Administration
3. Management of Quality Assurance and Improvement
4. Learning and Teaching
5. Student Administration and Support Services
6. Learning Resources
7. Facilities and Equipment
8. Financial Planning and Management
9. Employment Processes
10. Research
11. Institutional Relationships with the Community

Information on institutional performance and performance in relation to the standards should be supported by specific information including KPIs wherever possible.

For a number of the standards the administrative arrangements and processes for the activity concerned will be described in other documents and need not be repeated. However the introductory section of the report on each standard should include any background information the steering committee believes should be drawn to the attention of an external review team. This should include a brief description of processes followed in relation to that standard and how the quality of performance was assessed, including evidence considered. It might also include recent changes in arrangements or new strategies being introduced.

The reports on the standards should be considered as research reports on the quality of the institution and presented in a way that is comparable to other research reports. For each standard there should be a brief statement on the processes followed for investigation and preparation of the report.

The completed rating scales from the *Self Evaluation Scales for Higher Education Institutions* will be made available to the external review team and that level of detail need not be repeated in this descriptive report though ratings on particular items may be

shown. However, particular strengths and weaknesses should be noted with evidence cited in tables or other appropriate forms of presentation. As noted above, key performance indicators and benchmarks should be referred to wherever appropriate and reference should be made to other documents where more detailed information could be obtained.

For functions that are fully or partly decentralized and administered by units in different parts of the institution consideration should be given to the overall level of performance, and also to variations in quality of performance in different parts of the institution. Very high levels of performance (verified by evidence) should be acknowledged, and problem areas identified. Where weaknesses are found these should be considered as opportunities for improvement and the reports should indicate what is planned to deal with them. Trends in quality of performance should be noted and improvements in response to remedial action acknowledged.

Independent Evaluation

Summary of views of independent external evaluator(s)

This might be an overview of the views presented by evaluators to the sections of the evaluation above, a comment by an external evaluator on the report as a whole, or a combination of these approaches.

Conclusion and Action Plan

- An overall summary of the results of the self-study noting areas of high achievement and areas of concern that require attention
- A list and brief description of actions that are recommended at the level of the institution as a whole, in parts of the institution where weaknesses have been identified, or where strategic priorities have been established for improvements. Matters that are regarded as the highest strategic priorities should be identified.

CHAPTER 2

Program Planning and Reporting

The recommendations made in this chapter are for use by institutions in their own internal quality assurance processes for educational programs. However they also support the preparation for external reviews for the purposes of program accreditation and re-accreditation. Processes for quality assurance for administrative units and for whole of institutional evaluations are described in Chapter 3.

Criteria for Evaluation of Programs

The most important criterion for program evaluation is the learning achieved by students and evaluations focus particularly on the quality and appropriateness of that learning, processes to verify standards of achievement, and the infrastructure and services provided to support and improve its quality. The most direct measure of students learning is the tests and assignments that they undertake. However, results on these have little meaning unless there are processes to verify:

- that the intended learning outcomes include what is necessary for a program in that field of study,
- that standards achieved are appropriate for the level of qualification to be granted, and
- that standards for assessments by instructors are consistently and rigorously applied and comparable to those at other good quality institutions.

There are several sources of guidance on what should be included in programs in various fields of study, These include a *National Qualifications Framework* that identifies broad domains of learning that should be developed in all programs, the requirements for program accreditation by specialist accrediting organizations in most professional fields, consideration of what is included in similar programs elsewhere, and an analysis of any particular requirements for professional practice in the environment for which students are being prepared. In addition, recent research and developments in the field concerned should be monitored on a continuing basis, and appropriate modifications made in programs to reflect these developments.

To assist institutions in specifying learning outcomes for programs, the NCAAA has, with the assistance of leading international experts and substantial consultation within KSA, prepared illustrative learning outcomes for undergraduate programs in seven fields—Business Studies, Engineering, Teacher Education, Dentistry, Medicine, Pharmacy, and Nursing.

There are also a number of sources of guidance (and evidence) about the standards that are expected of students and it is very important that these be used. The *National Qualifications Framework* gives descriptions of standards expected for different levels of qualifications. These are necessarily expressed in general terms and other mechanisms are needed in applying those general descriptions and checking standards in relation to appropriate external benchmarks. Mechanisms to verify standards can include standard tests in some areas of learning, but for many learning outcomes informed judgments must

be made and it is necessary to take action to ensure those judgments are appropriate and consistent. Commonly used practices include clear specification of criteria for assessment, workshop activities for teaching staff in which examples of students work are evaluated and judgments compared and standardized, blind second marking of at least a sample of student tests and assignments, and most importantly, comparisons of samples of student work and assessments given for similar tasks by students at other comparable institutions.

It is sometimes suggested that as an aspect of academic freedom individual instructors should have the flexibility to vary the detailed content of courses and make their own judgments about standards for assessment. This is not correct. While some flexibility is desirable to meet varying needs of different groups of students, to consider and learn from external events that occur while a course is in progress, and to benefit from the special professional or research expertise of different instructors the course belongs to the institution, not the individual instructor, and the institution (through department or college administration) must have effective mechanisms for ensuring that course expectations are met and that standards of student achievement are consistent and appropriate. Common signs of difficulty are significantly varying pass rates or grade distributions in different courses within a program. These should be investigated.

The standard for learning and teaching specified by the Commission includes several sub standards and a number of specific practices relating to student learning outcomes, program planning and review, and student assessments. Satisfaction of these requirements is necessary for program accreditation. There are also a number of other expectations relating to processes for improving the quality of learning and teaching, supporting services and facilities, and administrative and planning arrangements that are set out in the *Standards for Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Higher Education Programs*, and the *Self Evaluation Scales for Higher Education Programs*. Judgments for accreditation will pay particular attention to the appropriateness and standards of students learning outcomes, but all of the specified standards must be met

Integrated Planning for Educational Programs

An educational program should be considered as a coordinated package of learning experiences within which all the components contribute to the learning expected of students. It is not simply a collection of separate courses taught in relative isolation from each other. Each course should complement and reinforce what is taught in others, and this applies not only to the substantive content of the courses, but also to development and refinement of communication skills, interpersonal skills, capacity for leadership and so on. This means that each course must be planned as part of the total program package and delivered as proposed.

Of course the planning must also provide for flexibility to take advantage of special skills of particular instructors, the experience and needs of different students and to respond to changing circumstances. Consequently there must be mechanisms to monitor what happens when courses are taught, and if necessary, to make adjustments to ensure that the overall objectives of the program as a whole are met. The documents described in this chapter are designed to support these comprehensive planning arrangements, to note what happened when plans were implemented, and to assist in planning response that may be

needed. The periodic self studies are designed as a more comprehensive re-examination of the approach taken in the light of quality evaluations and changing circumstances.

2.1 Program Planning and Review Cycle

Details of what should be included in various specifications and reports are set out in Section 2.2 below. They are based on the following arrangements for quality planning and review applied to educational programs:

For each program a specification is prepared setting out the plans for development of the program—its mission and objectives, the courses that will be included, the main learning objectives in the form of intended learning outcomes, what teaching strategies should be used to develop that learning, how learning will be assessed and how the quality of the course should be evaluated. This specification, once prepared, is followed on a continuing basis, though it may be adjusted from time to time as a result of experience or changing circumstances.

Similar plans are developed for each course, so those who are to teach the course are clear about what is to be learned, what its contributions are to the overall program, and how its effectiveness should be assessed. The course specification also applies on a continuing basis subject to changes required as a result of experience. In programs with field experience components (such as an internship or cooperative program), a field experience specification is prepared setting out intended learning outcomes, planning and organizational arrangements and processes for evaluation.

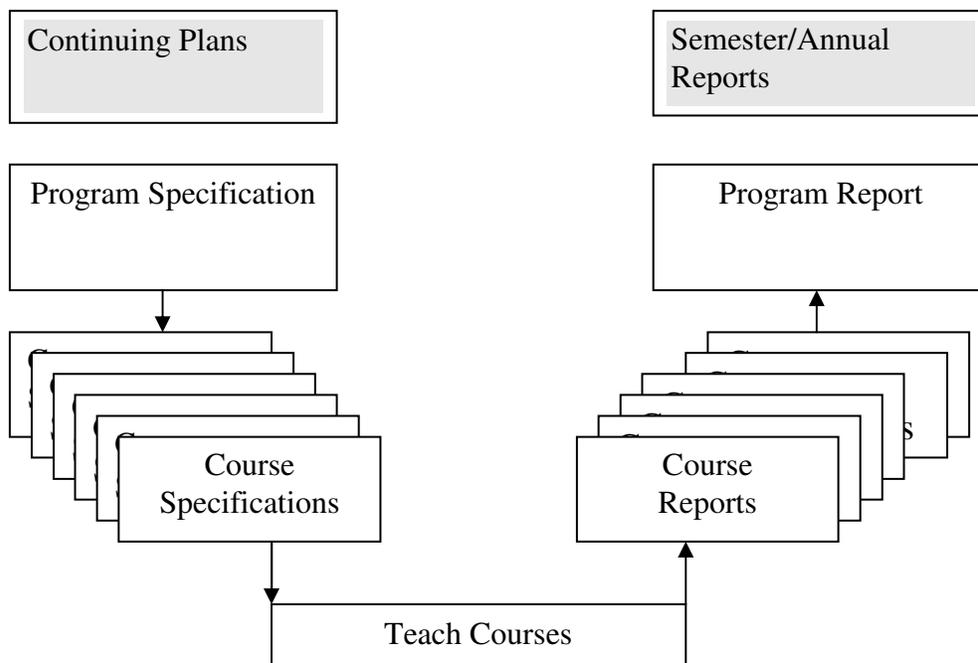
At the end of each year (or each time the course is taught) brief reports are prepared by the instructor for each course indicating what happened as it was taught and providing a summary of students' results. These reports should be given to the program coordinator.

When the course reports are received the program coordinator prepares a program report recording key information about the delivery of the program in the year concerned and noting any adjustments in the specifications that are needed.

If for any reason important components of the course could not be completed or there were any other unanticipated developments, details should be made known to the program coordinator so any necessary adjustments can be made in later courses to compensate. It is also possible that modifications may need to be made in the course for other reasons, and the program coordinator should be in a position to consider any suggestions of this sort taking account of their impact on the overall program.

Any modifications in the program or the courses taught within it should be noted in the program and course specifications, with the reasons for the changes recorded.

The following diagram illustrates this planning and review sequence



These documents, together with any other relevant material such as course or program evaluations, or information about other matters affecting the program should be retained in course portfolios and a program portfolio, so reference can be made to them as required at a later time.

In addition to this annual cycle periodic self studies of a program should be undertaken on a five yearly cycle to coincide with requirements for re-accreditation by the Commission. These periodic self studies involve stepping back from ongoing operations and reviewing all aspects of the program in the light of developments over a period of time and possible changes in the environment for which students are being prepared. Details of requirements for these periodic self- studies are included in Section 2.12 below.

2.2 Program and Course Specifications and Reports

2.2.1 Program Specifications

The primary purpose of the program specification is to support the planning, monitoring and improvement of the program by those responsible for its delivery. It should include sufficient information to demonstrate that the program will meet the requirements of the *Standards for Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Higher Education Programs*, the *National Qualifications Framework*, and any specific requirements relating to professional accreditation in the field of study concerned. In addition to guiding those teaching in the program, the program specification is a key reference for processes of accreditation by the Commission.

Matters to be included in a program specification are set out in detail in a template for program specifications in ATTACHMENT 3 (a) together with brief guidelines for

completing the template. The specification should include general descriptive information about the program, the external environment affecting it, the learning outcomes expected of students and the approach to teaching and student assessment strategies to develop those learning outcomes in different domains of learning. The emphasis in the approach taken is on the program being an integrated package of learning experiences provided through the courses taught. The program specification must include plans for ongoing evaluation of its effectiveness and planning processes for improvement.

2.2.2 Course Specifications

Individual course specifications should be prepared for each course in a program, and kept on file with the program specification. The purpose is to make clear the details of planning for the course as part of the package of arrangements to achieve the intended learning outcomes of the program as a whole. Consequently course specifications should include the knowledge and skills to be developed in keeping with the *National Qualifications Framework* and the overall learning outcomes of the program, the strategies for teaching and assessment in sufficient detail to guide individual instructors, as well as the learning resources, facilities requirements and any other special needs. Course specifications should be prepared for both core and elective courses.

As for the program specifications a template for course specifications is included in ATTACHMENT 2 (e) together with guidelines for completing the template.

The structure of a course specification is similar to that for a program as a whole. It includes the intended learning outcomes and the strategies for developing those learning outcomes for the different types of learning described in the *National Qualifications Framework*, processes for course evaluation based on evidence with verification of interpretations of that evidence, and planning for improvement.

2.2.3 Field Experience Specifications

In many professional programs a field experience activity (which may be called a practicum, a cooperative program, an internship or another title) is one of the most valuable components of a program. Although normally offered off campus in an industry or professional setting and supervised at least in part by persons outside the institution, it should be considered as the equivalent of a course and planned and evaluated with considerable care.

A separate specification should be provided to indicate as clearly as possible what is intended for students to learn and what should be done to ensure that learning takes place. This should involve careful preparation of the students and planning in cooperation with the agencies where the field experience will occur. It must also involve some follow up activities with students to consolidate what has been learned and generalize that to other situations they are likely to face in the future.

The arrangements for these preparatory and follow up activities, and the processes that will take place during the field experience should be included in a field experience specification. A template for the specifications and guidelines for completing it are

included in ATTACHMENT 2 (i). Like the other templates there are a number of items that are applicable to most field experience activities. However additional matters can be added if needed to meet any particular requirements for a program or institution.

2.2.4 Course Reports

At the conclusion of each semester or year in which a course is taught the instructor should prepare a summary report for the program coordinator. This should be attached to a copy of the course specification, included in a subject file or portfolio, and used for consideration in the review of the program.

As for the other specifications and reports, a template for course reports and guidelines for completing the reports are included in ATTACHMENT 2 (g).

2.2.5 Field Experience Reports

Field experience reports should be prepared each year to document what happened, how effective the program has been, and to review the results and make plans for any future adjustments to improve it. The main elements of the report are similar to those for regular courses though necessarily different in some respects because of the nature of the activity. A template for a field experience activity is included in ATTACHMENT 2 (k) with a further set of guidelines for completing it.

2.2.6 Annual Program Reports

A program report should be prepared at the end of each year after consideration of course reports and other information about the delivery of the program. The report should be based on the program specification and describe how what happened in the program compared with what was intended to happen, report on its quality, and indicate any changes that should be made for future delivery as a result of experience in the year concerned. The program report would normally be prepared by a program coordinator/director, reviewed by a program committee, and kept on file with the program specification as an ongoing record of the development of the program over time.

A template for annual program reports is presented in ATTACHMENT 2 (c) together with guidelines for completing it. The matters identified for inclusion in a program report focus on specific matters likely to be significant in most programs. However additional matters may be included if considered relevant to a particular program.

The action plan developed following the initial ratings on relevant sections of the *Self Evaluation Scales for Higher Education Programs* should identify particular priorities for development, and matters of concern that should be closely monitored on a continuing basis. Ratings on the matters selected for continuing monitoring should be included with the annual report.

The report on quality in the program should be based on evidence provided from a range of sources, including students and others, and interpretations of that evidence should be verified by someone who is not directly involved in it. An important element in this process must be an appropriate mechanism for checking standards of student

achievement against standards in similar programs elsewhere. The reports should include a relatively small number of key performance indicators that can be used for within-institution comparisons as well as monitoring aspects of the quality of the program over time.

The annual report should include an action plan that indicates action to be taken in response to the evaluations undertaken and subsequent reports should consider the results of that action as well as any new information emerging at that later time.

Procedures should be in place to ensure that course and program reports are completed as soon as possible so that any necessary responses can be implemented without undue delay.

Copies of the program report should be provided to the head of the college or department responsible for the program and to the institution's central quality center.

To enable senior administrators responsible for academic affairs in the institution, the senior curriculum committee, and the quality committee to monitor quality of programs in the institution on a continuing basis, information should be provided each year on key performance indicators applicable to all programs. These KPIs should include those required by the Commission, together with any others identified by the institution to monitor performance or the progress on any new policy initiatives.

22.7 Initial Development of Program and Course Specifications

The logical sequence in developing a program and course specification and a set of courses and field experience activities is to begin with a program mission and broad objectives, consider examples of programs and courses offered elsewhere and any special requirements and priorities for this particular program, and start with a program specification. The program specification should include the knowledge and skills to be developed, the strategies to be used in developing those abilities for the program as a whole. A second task is to distribute responsibility for parts of that overall task to individual courses. This second task involves specifying the knowledge and skills to be included in different courses and also assigning responsibility for developing the more generic abilities such as communication skills and use of IT, independent study skills, and capacity to work effectively in groups and exercise leadership and so on. Certain courses may be given the responsibility for initial development of these abilities, but they must be reinforced and progressively strengthened in other courses throughout a program.

While it is logical to start planning by developing a program specification in this way and then proceed to the development of individual courses to implement that program plan, in practice most programs will already be in existence. Members of faculty may be committed to "their course", one they have been teaching for many years, and the planning process must be one of modifying an existing program structure rather than developing a completely new one.

In a situation of this sort the logical sequence described above may be modified provided certain precautions are taken. The alternative approach involves preparing initial drafts of the program and course specifications concurrently, then bringing them together with

appropriate modifications in courses to ensure coherence for the total package. This provides for wider participation, but carries a danger that the result will simply perpetuate the current set of courses without reviewing them thoroughly in the light of what the total program requires.

If this second approach is used the following steps are recommended:

Specify very carefully the mission and learning outcomes of the program and the range of problem solving abilities and generic skills that should be developed in the program as a whole. In doing this consideration should be given to the learning outcomes specified in the *National Qualifications Framework* for the qualification level concerned, to the knowledge and skill required for any profession for which students are to be prepared, to what is included in similar programs at other good quality institutions, and to any special requirements for graduates in that field in Saudi Arabia. This should be done in sufficient detail and with any necessary explanations to provide a basis for decisions about what should be included or excluded in the program. Wherever possible express the learning outcomes in terms of what students can do (or will habitually do) rather than giving a list of content. A very clear statement is essential. The intended learning outcomes can be specified in a more formal summary statement at a later stage for inclusion in the program specification.

This work should be done by a small program planning committee, and then discussed and (hopefully) agreed in a broader meeting with staff teaching in the program.

The program planning committee prepares a draft program specification using the template provided by the Commission. Information in the sections of the template should be sufficiently detailed to communicate clearly to all members of teaching staff involved with the program.

Individuals or small sub-committees of teaching staff familiar with existing courses prepare draft specifications for their courses. They should be asked to indicate clearly any prerequisite learning that is necessary before students start the course, to indicate how material taught could be utilized or further developed in later courses, and to make tough decisions about any content that could be omitted or new information or skills that should be included, taking into account the mission and learning outcomes specified in (i) above.

The program planning committee then reviews the suggested course specifications, making adjustments where necessary, and assigning major responsibility for the development of generic skills (e.g. utilizing web based reference material, group processes, use of IT for analysis and reporting, etc) to individual courses as appropriate. A course planning matrix summarizing these allocations should be attached to the program specification. Teaching staff who have been responsible for courses should be consulted about these amended course plans and assignments of responsibility, the final drafts discussed in a broader meeting of teaching staff, and the program and course specifications formally approved by the relevant decision making body.

One of the problems faced by program planners is that the amount of relevant knowledge in almost any field of study is continually increasing. Faculty members with expert

knowledge in their specialized teaching field are likely to be aware of this and continually introduce new information. When this tendency is combined with demands to broaden approaches to teaching to include group processes, independent learning skills, open ended problem solving and communication skills the expectations for students can become unrealistic, and some tough decisions have to be made about what is essential learning and what, if anything, can be left out. There must be a strong mechanism for final decision making to ensure that essential knowledge and skills are included, that total expectations for student learning are realistic and appropriate for the level of qualification concerned, and that students have the capacity, and the commitment to continue learning to keep up to date with developments in their field.

2.3 Initial Program Evaluation Using the Self Evaluation Scales

It is important at an early stage in the implementation of program quality assurance arrangements to carry out an evaluation of the quality of the program using the rating scales provided in the *Self Evaluation Scales for Higher Education Programs*. An evaluation carried out in this way should reveal strengths and weaknesses and draw attention to any important matters that may have been overlooked. Following that assessment, priorities should be determined and action plans developed for improvements where needed. This information should be kept on file in the program portfolio, and progress in implementation of plans for improvement relating to these matters monitored on at least an annual basis. Other matters might be checked periodically, but need not be formally assessed each year.

An initial program evaluation might be carried out as part of a broader institutional assessment, in which case the institution's quality center or quality committee may have developed some procedures or templates for presentation of results. Subject to any such requirements the following arrangements are suggested. They follow the same general steps as an institutional self evaluation, but on a smaller scale.

Form a small committee to plan for the evaluation. Depending on the numbers involved and the size of the program this committee might function as a planning and steering committee with subcommittees carrying out detailed work, or might serve as a working party and undertake much of the work itself. If the program is offered in both male and female sections, there should be adequate participation from both sections. Inclusion of some students on relevant subcommittees is encouraged.

Make a general announcement about the evaluation to teaching and other staff, and to students, indicating why it is being done, explaining the procedures to be followed, and inviting participation. Depending on the nature of the program, if there are other stakeholders they should be informed and invited to contribute.

Preliminary consideration should be given to the self evaluation scales for each of the standards to determine what evidence is available or could be obtained to support quality judgments. For some items the planning group will know whether a practice is followed or not, and will have an informed opinion about how well this is done. In other cases evidence may not be currently available, but could be obtained by examination of documents, from student or other records available in the department or elsewhere or in the institution, or through surveys or interviews with individuals or groups. There may

also be cases where evidence is not available, and cannot be provided at the time to assist in the initial self evaluation.

The committee or subcommittees complete the self evaluation scales drawing on the evidence that is available or that can be obtained. An important initial step should be to think about what kind of evidence would be appropriate for each individual item. In some cases, it will be obvious whether certain processes are followed or not. However the main concern is how well they are done. Evidence might include statistical data or completed evaluation scales by students, graduates, teaching staff or employers, or informed opinions by people independent of those supplying a service. Evaluations will usually require comparative judgments which could be comparisons with past performance, results in other parts of the institution or other good quality institutions similar to your own. Scales should be completed for both male and female sections where relevant, using the same processes for collecting information. Where evidence on matters judged to be important is not available this should be noted and consideration given to how evidence could be provided in future. Members of teaching staff and students might be asked to complete some of the scales or related survey items. However distributing the complete scales is not recommended because it would be a very large survey and information about many of the items would not be available to them. On the other hand where students and staff could reasonably be expected to have valid opinions, the possibility of different perceptions by the different groups could be an important source of information.

The committee reviews the responses noting any differences between sections, and either develops recommended priorities for improvement or further development, or reviews the recommendations of sub-committees to propose overall priorities.

The results of the self evaluation, including completed self evaluation scales and suggested priorities for improvement or development could then be the subject of a general meeting of teaching staff during which opinions could be expressed about the evaluations and the recommendations.

Any recommendations arising from this process should be included in a (strategic) quality improvement plan for the program to be considered by the appropriate administrators and committees within the department or institution.

These suggestions have been made for a department responsible for the administration of a program. They can be modified as appropriate for differing circumstances.

For example if the process is followed for a college with a number of departments offering different programs, a steering committee could be established at the level of the college, with membership drawn from each of the departments. Detailed evaluations would then be carried out at department level, and an overview of the programs developed for the college using a procedure similar to that described in Section 1.6.3 in Chapter 1. In a college of education or a college of medicine there may be a number of departments contributing courses to a single program. A similar process should be followed using a steering committee and subcommittee considering the quality of what is done in each department.

2.4 Quality Improvement Planning for a Program or Department

A quality improvement plan for a program or department should include both any action required to deal with problems found in an initial self evaluation (or to build on strengths) and any action needed to meet the requirements for accreditation of programs.

The exact requirements will vary for different programs, but they will always include:

A program specification and course specifications for all courses (and a field experience specification if applicable) in the format required by the Commission (See ATTACHMENT 2)

Preparation of annual course and program reports in the format required by the Commission.

The processes required for the standard for learning and teaching including those relating to consistency with the *National Qualifications Framework*, and relevant specialized accreditation requirements, mechanisms for verifying standards of student achievement and improving quality of teaching. Student surveys and other forms of program evaluation are required and information must be provided on the Commission's Key Performance Indicators.

The program should satisfy all of the standards specified for higher education programs and the major subsections of those standards. Although a high rating is not required on every single item within each subsection any weaknesses should have been identified and appropriate action should be being taken to deal with them.

2.5 Verifying Consistency With the National Qualifications Framework

One of the requirements for accreditation of a program is that it is consistent with the *National Qualifications Framework*. It is important to ensure that a program is consistent with the qualifications framework as it is being developed, and also during a self study leading to an external review for accreditation. For provisional accreditation of a program the design of the program and the processes planned for program evaluation will be considered. For full accreditation it will be necessary to provide evidence that the learning outcomes actually achieved by students meet the requirements of the framework.

The *National Qualifications Framework* does not prescribe detailed content of programs. However it does set out broad areas or domains of knowledge and skill and describes in general terms, the standards that should be achieved in each of those areas or domains for each qualification level.

Particular requirements include:

Use of qualification titles that clearly and consistently describe the education sector, the qualification level, and the field of study or specialization

The minimum number of credit hours required for each qualification

Appropriately specified learning outcomes in each of the domains of learning (knowledge, cognitive skills, interpersonal skills and responsibility, communication, IT and numerical skills, and where relevant to the program, psychomotor skills)

Evidence that required standards of learning outcomes for the qualification level concerned are achieved in each of those domains

The following notes describe what must be done to meet these requirements for accreditation.

Requirement 1 The title of the qualification must comply with the *National Qualifications Framework*.

Particular attention is drawn to the need to use the correct term for the qualification level concerned and the requirements for citing a field of study specialization. A technical training program should include the term “technical” and a higher education program should not. A qualification with the title Master or Doctor must meet all the requirements for such a title in the *National Qualifications Framework* regardless of any differing practice in another country. Any program that does not fully satisfy these requirements will not be accredited.

Requirement 2 The number of credit hours required for the qualification must be at least as specified in the framework.

When considering credit hours included in a program several important considerations should be kept in mind.

- The credit hours in a program must be in addition to any foundation or preparatory studies
- The Commission will recognize a maximum of 18 credit hours within a semester of full time study or work.

The credit hour formula is based on a numbering system in which a full time student load is 15 to 18 credit hours in a semester and 120 to 138 credit hours in a four year degree. The credit hour formula is used as a surrogate for estimates of the amount of learning achieved. If a program has a high number of contact hours this formula can result in an unrealistically high number which does not accurately represent the amount of learning that can reasonably be expected.

Requirement 3 The program objectives should develop learning outcomes in all of the required domains of learning. (Note that the domain of psychomotor skills is required for some but not all programs)

To provide evidence that this is done:

- Learning objectives specified for the program should include outcomes in all of the domains.

- Responsibility for achieving these learning outcomes should be distributed appropriately across the courses within the program and included in course objectives.
- Program and course specifications should include methods of teaching and student activities that are appropriate for the learning outcomes in each of the domains.
- Tests, examinations and other required assessment tasks should include appropriate forms of assessment of learning in each of the domains.
- Program evaluations, including student, graduate or employer surveys and/or other mechanisms should include attention to learning outcomes in each of the domains.

Requirement 4 The standards achieved in each of the domains must be consistent with the descriptions of characteristics of graduates and the descriptions of learning outcomes for the qualification level concerned.

Some of these learning outcomes can be assessed in tests and examinations or other assessment tasks within the program and others relate to characteristics of graduates after they have left the institution. A further complication is that the standards are expressed in general terms that require levels of judgment about standards achieved. Consequently much of the evidence of consistency with standards of achievement must rely on indirect measures and informed professional judgments. To satisfy requirements for accreditation the following sources of evidence should be included in program evaluations.

- Program evaluations and self assessments by graduates of the program.
- Independent advice by professional colleagues from other institutions or trained evaluators on the level of difficulty in tests and assignments and the standards achieved by students.
- Survey responses from employers of graduates or senior professional associates of graduates.

2.6 Using Programs Developed by Another Organization

Arrangements are sometimes made for the development of programs by another organization. This could be done as a special task by a consulting organization or by another higher education institution and may be part of an ongoing arrangement to provide assistance in program development and quality assurance. Arrangements of this sort can be very helpful for an institution opening a new college or developing a program in a new field of study, but there are a number of things that must be considered if the arrangement is to work effectively and meet local requirements.

Development of a program by another organization does not remove responsibility for quality from the Saudi Arabian institution. In considering a program for accreditation, the Commission will regard the materials and advice provided as one source of external advice on the design of the program. However, the institution delivering the program and issuing the qualification is ultimately responsible for that design as well for all the resources and services associated with the teaching of the program.

All requirements for accreditation of the program in Saudi Arabia must be met regardless of the standing or reputation of the organization that develops the program. Adopting a program that has been accredited elsewhere does not remove any of these requirements.

The requirements in Saudi Arabia include consistency with the *National Qualifications Framework*, the standards for learning and teaching and other standards required by the Commission, presentation of the program and course designs in the format required for program and course specifications, and adaptation of any material developed elsewhere to meet any special needs in Saudi Arabia for a program of its type. An institution seeking help from another organization in developing programs is strongly advised to provide details of all Saudi Arabian requirements to that other organization at an early stage in the development process.

2.7 Programs Offered in Different Locations

A program offered under the same title in different locations is the same program and will be considered as a single program in any review for accreditation. This applies to sections for male and female students, to an institution's main campus and other branch, remote or distant campuses, including campuses in other countries. In conducting a self-study in preparation for an accreditation review, quality data must be collected using the same processes in all locations and information provided both by the campus and for the program as a whole. Delivery arrangements may vary according to differing circumstances in different locations but the overall standards for accreditation must be met in each location. Where weaknesses are found, appropriate strategies must have been developed for remedying those weaknesses.

While these requirements are generally applicable there are several special circumstances that will be taken into account.

If an institutional merger has taken place within the two years prior to a review for accreditation and an existing program on a newly acquired campus is in the process of modification to comply with the program specification for the institution it has joined, the program at the merging campus will be excluded from the review. However, the self evaluation scales must have been completed at the merging campus and there must be an appropriate strategic plan for any changes needed. If accreditation is granted the program at the merging campus will be excluded. When the strategic plan has been implemented a supplementary review may be conducted at the merging campus and if accreditation standards are met, the accreditation may be extended to include the program at that location.

For full accreditation of a program, the first group of students must have graduated, and the accreditation judgment will take account of the skills developed by the graduates. However, a situation may arise where a program from which students have graduated in one location is being introduced at another location and there are no graduates from that section or campus. In these circumstances the quality of the program at the locations where it is being introduced will be assessed using processes for a developmental review. This process considers the adequacy of plans for the program, and an evaluation of what has been done by the time of the review. Full accreditation may be granted for the sections of the program where students have graduated and provisional accreditation for

the locations where it is still being introduced. After the first students have graduated from that location, the NCAAA may conduct a supplementary assessment and if standards are met, may extend the full accreditation to the program in that location.

If a program is offered in another country, it will be expected to comply with the regulations that are in place in that location. This may necessitate some variations from the standards and processes required for accreditation in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. In this situation, the program can still be accredited in Saudi Arabia by the NCAAA provided any conflicting regulations or requirements are clearly specified, that all NCAAA standards other than those that are in conflict are met, and that where conflicts exist quality assurance arrangements that are equivalent to those of the NCAAA are in place. The program must demonstrate that at least equivalent standards of learning outcomes are achieved.

2.8 Programs Offered in Community Colleges

A number of institutions have established community colleges with programs that may be either technical or higher education in nature. There are very important differences in the nature of these different types of program and any program at a community college must be clearly and specifically identified as one or the other.

If a community college offers a technical training program, it will be assessed by the NCAAA according to the standards it has defined for technical and vocational training programs. If the college offers a higher education program, that program will be evaluated according to the standards of higher education programs. This means that program and course specifications and reports and other requirements for higher education programs must be prepared.

Higher education programs offered by community education colleges normally lead to a diploma or associate degree as a qualification for employment or for admission with advanced standing to a degree program at a university or other higher education program. Both these objectives can be met but they require different forms of evidence of quality. If an important objective is to prepare students for employment, the program must be able to demonstrate that it has consulted fully with employers in that field about the employment skills required, that its graduates have developed those skills to a satisfactory level, and that employers are satisfied with the result. If an important objective is to prepare students for admission with advanced standing to other higher education programs, it must be possible to demonstrate that a significant proportion of graduates are admitted to those programs and that they have the knowledge and skills to proceed successfully to further study. This does not mean that such programs should duplicate exactly the first two years of study for a four year degree at a university. In fact it is probably undesirable that they do so if they are also preparing students for employment at that stage. However, there should be sufficient grounding in core courses to provide a sound basis for further studies at a more advanced level.

2.9 Preparatory or Foundation Year Programs

A number of institutions have introduced preparatory or foundation year programs to ensure that students have the knowledge and skills to succeed in their higher education

studies. These precede and are not part of a higher education program. The higher education program that follows must meet all the credit hour requirements for a program in that field, excluding any credits that may have been granted during the preparation or foundation program.

An important item in the standards for higher education programs is entry standards that ensure that students beginning a program have the necessary knowledge and skill to succeed in that program.

Preparatory or foundation programs can help in meeting this requirement. However, time spent in such a program does not guarantee that those skills have been developed and progress into a degree program should not be automatic. Appropriate standards, for example in standardized English language tests or in mathematics as required for different higher education programs should be set, and admission to the higher education programs at the higher education institution should be conditional on those standards being met.

These requirements should not be common for all programs. For example, if a higher education program is to be taught in English, a higher standard of English should be set. If a program in engineering or science requires skills in mathematics, a higher standard could be required for entry to those programs than for one in humanities where the requirements for mathematical skills may not be as high.

2.10 Distance Education Programs

Programs offered through both on campus face-to-face delivery and through distance education that carry the same title are considered as the same program. For such a program to be accredited, the learning outcomes for the programs and students standards of achievement must be equal.

The approach to a program self study for a program offered by distance education and by face-to-face delivery should be comparable to that for a program offered in different sections or locations. That is evaluations should be carried out for both modes of delivery with any significant differences in the extent to which standards are met made clear in a combined report.

General standards for higher education programs, and a set of self evaluation scales based on those standards have been defined by the NCAAA. There are also separate documents that show the same general standards and self evaluation scales with additional items dealing with particular requirements for distance education programs. For a program offered only by distance education, the distance education documents should be used. For a program offered through both modes, both sets of documents should be used.

Reference is made elsewhere in this Handbook to program and course specifications and reports that show detailed plans for teaching and reports on the effectiveness with which those plans have been implemented. If a program is offered through both distance education and face-to-face delivery the strategies for teaching and processes for

evaluation will be different. Consequently there should be different versions of these specifications that show what is planned and done in each delivery mode.

It was noted in Chapter 1 of this Handbook that the Ministry of Higher Education has introduced new regulations for the delivery of distance education programs that are being introduced over a five year transition period commencing in the Fall Semester 2010. During this period new students may only be admitted to programs that meet the new regulations, but institutions will have until Fall 2015 to fully implement the new arrangements for students that were admitted previously to distance education programs.

The NCAAA has agreed to work with the same transition period in its accreditation processes and the details of its approach are described in section 1.7.7. For accreditation of a program that may be offered by distance education during this period, the self evaluation scales for distance education programs must have been completed and have a strategic plan developed for meeting the NCAAA standards by Fall 2015. If this condition is met, the distance education portion of the program will be excluded from consideration in the accreditation judgment. If accreditation is granted, it will be for the face to face component of the program only.

During this transition period:

- A program offered entirely by distance education will not be considered for accreditation unless all the Ministry and NCAAA requirements are met.
- If a program is offered through face-to-face delivery and also separately through distance education, the on campus component of the program may be considered for accreditation, but if accreditation is granted it will apply to the on campus component only.
- If a program is offered in a way that allows some courses or other portions of the program to be taken by distance education, the NCAAA may agree to consider it for accreditation provided its distance education standards are fully met for the elements of the program that can be taken by distance education.

2. 11 Changes in Accredited Programs

It is expected that adjustments will be required in programs and courses from time to time in response to changing circumstances and results of course and program evaluations. Such changes are highly desirable to ensure that programs are to be kept up to date. However, if there is a major change to an accredited program it could affect the program's accreditation status and any such change should be notified to the Commission at least one full semester before it is introduced. The Commission can then assess the impact of the change on accreditation and would notify the institution if accreditation would be affected. Examples of major changes would be the addition or deletion of a major track within a program (e.g. accounting or international finance majors within a commerce or business degree); the addition or deletion of a core course (e.g. mathematics in an engineering degree); a change in title that implied a new or different field of study or qualification in a different profession, re-orientation or development of a program to prepare students for a different occupation or profession; a change in the length of a

program; or a new exit point within a longer program (e.g. the granting of an associate degree within a bachelors degree program).

In addition to such major changes, the Commission needs to maintain a record of what is included in programs that have accreditation. To enable the Commission to monitor developments in accredited programs, institutions are expected to provide brief (one page) annual reports on changes made, using the templates provided for this purpose. The templates for reporting on changes in programs are shown in ATTACHMENT 5, Part 3 of this Handbook.

2. 12 Periodic Program Self Study

Self study reviews of a program can be undertaken by the institution, college or department at any time, but to coincide with requirements for program re-accreditation by the Commission one should be undertaken in the fourth year after its initial accreditation, and after that on a five yearly cycle This periodic self-study examines the program in greater depth, re-evaluating the need for it, checking on how effectively it is achieving its mission and objectives, and planning for any changes that are needed. The course and program portfolios are important resources for this self-study since they should contain details of developments over time, the reasons for those developments, course and program evaluations, and the ideas of those who have had responsibility for teaching and learning.

The periodic program self-study provides the basic resource for the external review for re-accreditation of a program. Internal processes for carrying out a self study and preparing a self study report are described in section 2.10 below, and the external review procedures for accreditation and re-accreditation are described in Part 3 of this Handbook.

Periodic self-studies involve stepping back from day to day operations and thoroughly reviewing all aspects of a program and the extent to which it is achieving its objectives.

A self-study should also consider how a program has evolved over time in response to evaluations and changing circumstances and the probability that it will continue to be refined and improved in the future. Consequently developments over the period of review need to be considered as well as quality issues at the time of the self-study.

Periodic self-studies may be carried out at any time, but to provide information required for accreditation reviews by the Commission should be undertaken in the year prior to such an assessment. For a program that has provisional accreditation and for which full accreditation is sought this will normally be as soon as the first group of students has completed their programs. For a program that has full accreditation this will normally be once every five years.

The audience for periodic program self-studies is primarily the institution itself, as an important part of its processes of quality assurance and improvement. However since the self-study reports also provide the basis for external reviews for accreditation and re-accreditation, the steps undertaken and the format of reports must take account of the Commission's requirements.

A periodic self-study can be a major undertaking, but if it builds on the outcomes of continuing monitoring and planning, and if subject and program portfolios have been properly maintained most of the necessary information will already be available. A template for a periodic Program self study is included in ATTACHMENT 2 (m).

A self study will consider inputs, processes and outcomes and these are all incorporated in the standards and lists of “good practices” in the *Self Evaluation Scales for Higher Education Programs*. However, the most important of these considerations and the ultimate test of the value of a program is what students have learned and can do as a result of participating in it. Consequently special attention should be given to student learning outcomes including standards of student achievement and how these standards are verified.

Each program will have its own particular learning objectives relating to the field of study and/or profession for which students are being prepared. It must also deal with the range of domains of learning set out in the *National Qualifications Framework* at the level of performance expected for the qualification that is being obtained. Consequently particular attention in a program self-study should be given to student learning across this range of learning outcomes, the appropriateness of teaching strategies for those outcomes, and the effectiveness of coordination of students learning experiences across courses in the program.

2.13 Managing the Program Self-Study Process

A senior member of faculty should be nominated to take responsibility for leading the self-study with a small group of colleagues to help plan and coordinate the process. The nominated person might be the manager/coordinator of the program. However, it is generally considered preferable that a different person take on this role to ensure greater independence in the evaluations and recommendations that are involved. That could mean nomination of the dean of the college or head of the department within which the program is located, or another widely respected senior member of faculty familiar with the program, with good working knowledge of quality assurance processes, and desirably with recent experience in participating in or leading equivalent reviews.

Assistance and advice in developing the structure and processes of the review should be obtained from the institution’s quality center or unit, and if one has been appointed, from a nominated quality coordinator in the college or department. A comprehensive plan for carrying out the periodic program self study should be developed before it begins.

In planning the self-study a number of issues should be considered:

- **Scope and Special Emphasis**

There may be a number of factors influencing the scope and extent of the review. For example there may be parallel reviews in similar programs that require coordination of evaluations of core and elective subjects, there may have been significant developments in the profession or academic field of study that require investigation to assess implications for the program, and there may have been information from evaluations or changes within the institution that could mean

additional collections of evidence, or affect other aspects of planning. Any matters of this sort will affect the way the review process is planned and coordinated, and the time required to carry it out.

- **Time Scale**

Adequate time should be allowed for the planning and analysis involved in the self-study. Although time required may vary according to the nature of the program, the issues to be addressed, and the availability of surveys used for program evaluation it is usually expected that a periodic program self study could take up to nine months to complete. A plan for carrying out a self study should include time lines for carrying out stages of the process, and allow at least some time for unanticipated developments.

- **Administrative Arrangements**

A small steering committee should be established to help with planning and monitoring the process, and to advise on developments. If a program is offered in male and female sections representatives of both sections should be included. As for the person nominated to lead the process it is important that these people be respected colleagues who are familiar with quality assurance processes, have at least a reasonable understanding of the program and what it is trying to achieve, but have sufficient independence to reliably evaluate evidence and draw potentially critical conclusions. Depending on the experience of those available it may be beneficial to include some people from another department or program to help achieve objectivity. If resources are available the appointment of an independent facilitator can be extremely beneficial.

Small working groups should be established and asked to investigate and report on particular issues (for example, quality of teaching, developments in the professional or academic field, adequacy of learning resources). Students can often provide important contributions as members of these groups, but whether they are included as members or not, mechanisms to obtain their views should be built into the process. Representatives of both male and female sections should be included in these working groups as well. The use of working groups helps in providing for the participation of faculty as well as contributing to completion of the task. Membership of a group of this sort should also be regarded as a useful professional development exercise providing experience in quality assurance processes and insight into the effectiveness of their own activities as providers of elements of the program. The terms of reference for their activities should be clearly defined as part of the planning process and members should be fully briefed on their role. Members of the steering committee may take on the task of chairing one or more of these working groups. It is important to retain notes of meetings and of any special investigations or interviews conducted by these groups. These should be retained in a central file for the program and be available for subsequent reference if required.

- **Use of Evidence**

It is extremely important that analyses and conclusions should be based on valid evidence rather than subjective impressions. Much of the evidence required should be available from annual subject and program reports and these should be

made freely available to those in need of that data. Performance indicators selected in advance are important and should be carefully considered. However, the self-study should look beyond these to other sources, and may lead to a view that the selected indicators should be changed. An important part of the study will be to assess the responsiveness of the program to changing circumstances and to evaluations of quality in successive years. Consequently particular attention should be given to such things as surveys and questionnaire reports, the appropriateness of indicators and benchmarks of performance, the validity of conclusions drawn from analyses of them, the appropriateness of action plans and the extent to which they have been implemented.

It is also likely that after reviewing the available evidence some additional evidence on particular matters may be required. This may require additional data collection and analysis and interpretations of that data in drawing conclusions. It is important to obtain independent verification of such evidence wherever possible, and to cite clearly the evidence on which conclusions are based.

- **Resources**

The amount of effort required to complete a program self-study will vary according to the scope of the review and any special circumstances that may exist. However it will necessarily involve some faculty time, and it is likely that at least some special efforts will be required to investigate and find evidence relating to issues that may emerge. In planning it is desirable that some time allowance be given for key members of faculty who will have a major role in the analysis and preparation of reports, that some secretarial assistance be made available, and that provision be made for assistance with any special surveys or statistical analysis that is required.

- **Communication**

The self-study process should be open and transparent, with opportunities for faculty, students and other stakeholders to participate and offer suggestions. To achieve this result information should be provided at an early stage to all stakeholders that the self-study is being undertaken and inviting input. Any inputs should be acknowledged and considered by the relevant groups involved in the task, and there should be regular communications about stages of development. On completion of the self-study information should be made available about its main conclusions.

2.13.1 Independent Evaluation

As for other components of the quality assurance process, it is important to arrange for independent analysis and comment on what has been done and the conclusions that have been drawn.

If an institution chooses to use an independent quality agency or specialized accreditor for this purpose, valuable advice can be obtained as a result of that activity. However, if such a body is not used, it is still important to obtain independent verification of the analysis and conclusions. This can provide advice on possible gaps in the analysis, other problems that might be noticed by an independent observer, and possible alternative

solutions to problems that have been identified. Clearly a person or group selected for this role should have substantial experience in quality assurance processes and knowledge of the requirements of the field of study involved, and the confidence of those involved in the review.

The role of an independent evaluator is that of a critical friend. It is important for those responsible for the program and those conducting the self-study not to be defensive, but to share issues and problems. After all, the exercise is designed to find ways to improve the program, not to defend the status quo. It is also important for those providing comment and advice to do so in a constructive and cooperative manner. A summary of the report from an independent evaluator used in a self-study should be included in the report, and the full document attached.

Concluding Statement and Action Plan

A summary of major conclusions should be included in the self-study report, indicating both successful achievements, and areas where deficiencies have been identified and need to be addressed. This summary should then be used as a basis for developing an action plan to address the most urgent and important priorities for development.

All significant problems should be clearly identified and recommendations for remedial action made even if it may take some time for everything to be completed. On the other hand, proposed changes should be realistic, recognizing that there are limits to available resources, and that it would be unusual to find a situation where every desirable change could be made at once. Consequently recommendations should be strategic, focusing initially on the most urgent priorities with a sequence of anticipated further actions in a continuing program of change and improvement.

2.13.2 Matters for Inclusion in a Periodic Program Self-Study Report

(See template for a Periodic Program Self-Study Report in ATTACHMENT 2 (m))

General Information

Title of program, identification code and number of credit hours;

College or department responsible for the program;

Name of program coordinator/manager;

Qualifications or awards offered (including any intermediate awards);

Major tracks within the program;

Professions or occupations for which students will be prepared at each exit point;

Campus location(s) where program is delivered if not on the main campus;

If this is not the first self-study, the date of most recent self-study

Copies of the most recent version of the Program Specification, and the most recent Program Report should be attached, together with the program description in the form used for the bulletin or handbook. Copies of individual course specifications and reports should be available for reference if required.

Arrangements for the Self-Study

A description of organizational arrangements for the conduct of the self-study including establishment of a steering committee and any subcommittees that may be needed, dates and timelines, persons appointed, and processes followed. Terms of reference for working groups or committees or sub-committees should be attached as appendices.

Mission and Objectives

Mission, goals and objectives for development of the program, and indicators and benchmarks selected to provide evidence of performance.

Program Context

Summary of any significant changes in the environment affecting the program since the program was introduced or since the last periodic program self-study. This should consider any important developments in research or professional practice, scientific or technological developments affecting the demand for graduates, the skills they need, and any other matters affecting the need for and the operations of the program. Implications for the program arising from this analysis should be indicated.

Brief statement of any changes or new requirements from within the institution that have affected the program during the review period or that will affect it in the next planning period.

Comment on any changes that have been made or that could be required as a result of the review of the context.

Program Developments

A description of how the program has developed over the period since the last self-study (or if this is the first self-study, since the program was introduced. For the first self-study of a program that has been in operation in an existing institution for a number of years a period of four years is suggested to give an indication of recent changes). This description should include any courses added or deleted, significant changes in objectives, approaches to teaching or student assessment, and an explanation of reasons for those changes. The role played by stakeholders, including students, graduates, and relevant professional groups in identifying need for change and responding to changes made or proposed should be indicated;

Summary statistical information should be included on numbers of students enrolled over time, and trends in progression, completion, and employment rates;

For a new program that has been given provisional accreditation and will be considered for full accreditation, a table should be included comparing expected and actual enrollments in the program as a whole and in each major track over the period of review. Where there were significant variations from anticipated numbers, explanations should be given.

Program Evaluation

Description of results actions taken to achieve goals and objectives for the development and improvement of the program

Descriptive reports should be prepared on performance in relation to each of the eleven specified standards, i.e.

1. Mission and Objectives
2. Governance and Administration
3. Management of Quality Assurance and Improvement
4. Learning and Teaching
5. Student Administration and Support Services
6. Learning Resources
7. Facilities and Equipment
8. Financial Planning and Management
9. Employment Processes
10. Research
11. Relationships with the Community

Note that although the standards for programs involve the same areas of activity as for an institutional self study, the focus is what happens in this particular program, or on how a function carried out by another part of the institution affects this program.

Please note that it is extremely important to provide statistical data and hard evidence to support conclusions wherever possible. Opinion statements and judgments about quality based on the starting system in the self evaluation scales are useful of course, but of relatively little value in an accreditation assessment unless backed up by solid evidence wherever possible.

For a number of the standards the administrative arrangements and processes for the activity concerned will be described in other documents and need not be repeated. However, the introductory section of the report on each standard should include any background information that should be drawn to the attention of an external review team. This might include recent changes in arrangements or new strategies being introduced within the program, or changes elsewhere in the institution that have a significant effect on the program.

The report on the standards should be considered as a research report on the quality of the program and presented in a way that is comparable to other research reports. For each standard there should be a brief statement on the processes followed for investigation and preparation of the report.

The completed rating scales from the *Self Evaluation Scales for Higher Education Programs* will be made available to the external review team and that level of detail need not be repeated in this descriptive report. However particular strengths and weaknesses should be noted with evidence cited in tables or other appropriate forms of presentation. Key performance indicators and benchmarks should be referred to wherever appropriate

and reference should be made to other documents where more detailed information could be obtained.

Trends in quality of performance should be noted and improvements in response to remedial action acknowledged.

Review of Courses

A program is made up of a number of courses, and in many cases field experience activities. An important element in a program self study is a review of courses within it. The program self study should include summary information about what is done to review what happens in courses and consider any changes that might be necessary. This would normally involve consideration of course and field experience reports, data from student evaluations and consultations with graduates and employers, and developments in the field of study that might require changes in details of what is taught.

Suggestions for changes in courses based on this analysis including the addition or deletion of courses, changes in optional or required courses, and changes in course content.

2.14 Independent Evaluation

Summary of views of independent external evaluator(s) who might be colleagues from other departments or colleges familiar with this kind of program, or from other institutions. Since a number of different aspects of program development and delivery are involved, several different evaluators may be used for different issues considered. A full copy of the report(s) should be attached.

Conclusion and Action Plan

An overall summary of the results of the self-study noting areas of high achievement and areas of concern that require attention

Recommended action plan for achieving further improvements and overcoming weaknesses or problems that have been identified. The action plan should specify specific steps to be taken, indicate where responsibility should lie to take that action, and indicate timelines for implementation. Details of resources needed should be specified.

ATTACHMENT 1

Suggestions for Establishing a Quality Assurance System

The following suggestions are based on ideas from experienced quality officers in higher education institutions. They are intended as practical advice for persons who have been given responsibility for leading the development of a quality assurance system.

1. Get central support. Keep everyone informed.

Get support from the head of the institution (Rector, Dean) Ask for an announcement indicating how important it is for the institution to have an effective quality assurance system and that everyone is expected to be involved. The announcement could include reference to the introduction of systems in most other countries, and the importance for the nation of high quality here.

Ask that the announcement include reference to a quality committee, and the establishment of a quality unit or center to help plan, coordinate and assist.

2. Get a good team to work with.

Make sure the members of the committee are chosen carefully. Talk to the person nominated to chair the committee about how it is to be appointed. The chair will have good advice, and will want to influence who is selected and how it is done.

If the members are to be nominated by deans or heads of departments talk to them individually first. They may want to spread the load of administrative work rather than find you the best person for the task. Make sure they realize how important it is to have people who are committed to improving quality, who can give sound advice, and who can give leadership in their own department or college.

3. Do some research.

Talk with colleagues at other institutions. What are they doing? How did they start? Don't necessarily follow what they did; your situation may be different. But get their ideas, collect their materials and think about what would work at your institution.

Look at some websites. There are many examples of guidelines and procedures. Again, don't copy what may have been developed for a different situation, but choose ideas that you think may work for you. Look at the guidelines and templates in NCAAA Handbook

2. Try some of them out for your own course, for your own program. What help will you need to arrange for others when they use these forms.

4. Evaluate the current situation.

Think carefully about the current state of affairs in quality assurance at your institution. If you can get whatever evidence you can about the situation before you start you will have a basis for planning, and a benchmark against which to measure future performance. However do this in a non-intrusive way. You don't want to frighten everyone.

What evidence of quality is available? How reliable is it? What strengths and weaknesses are there? Are there any parts of the institution where people have been doing

interesting quality assurance activities that might provide a base for development elsewhere?

Use the self evaluation scales in the Self Evaluation Scales for Higher Education Institutions as a preliminary guide. However keep the process non threatening and as simple as possible. Talk with members of the committee about parts of the institution they know about and have them work with colleagues from the sections where they are known.

Ask some of the deans about what happens in their colleges. Ask them about the attitudes of faculty? Are they likely to be cooperative or will they resist? Is the organizational climate one in which faculty and staff will help each other?

5. Define your goals and objectives.

Think carefully about what you want to achieve. Base it on the mission and goals for your institution. You will need to meet the quality standards in time, but this still leaves room for special priorities for your institution. It may help to visualize an institution of the same type (which could be a real or an imaginary one) that you would regard as being of very high quality and think about differences between that institution and your own.

6. Develop a strategy.

Work out a strategy for development. Don't try to do everything at once but think about the best place for you to start. It probably won't be the worst area in the institution or even the most urgent priority (although you may need to get to that fairly quickly)

Early successes will be important so choose an area where you can try out ideas and have a good chance of succeeding, and where other groups may be interested in the results. It may be one or two programs, and an area of service provision such as the library or the deanship of student services..

When you have thought about what may be the best place to start think about things that might be barriers to change, and about things that might support you in introducing it. For example barriers to change may be lack of time or money to take on new tasks or worries about possible criticism by students. Factors supporting change may be the support of the Rector and a belief on the part of faculty that improving quality is important. Make a list of these barriers and possible supporting factors and think about how barriers could be overcome or supporting factors added to or strengthened.

Meet with the committee, get their advice, and see whether they agree with your strategy or have better ideas. Work out with them the best way to proceed.

7. Try out ideas.

If you are planning to use student surveys or other evaluation devices try them out on yourself first. If you develop a questionnaire try it on your own class. How do you feel when you look at what the students have said? It will help to prepare you for how others will feel when you ask them to do the same thing, and it will help persuade them if you have done it yourself. Talk to your students. Ask them whether the questionnaire let them say what they really thought.

Have a friend visit your classroom and talk with you afterwards about your teaching. How did you feel when that happened? What could you have done to make that feedback more helpful?

8. Conduct pilots.

Arrange a pilot development in the areas you selected to start with. Use the forms and processes for planning and evaluation from the attachment to Part 2 of this Handbook. Don't worry if you can't do everything the first time, do as much as you can. Have the people responsible for the area selected for the pilot study do the work, but work closely with them and keep notes on what happens. You will need to learn as much as you can from that activity so you can introduce the system to others next time. For these pilot studies, use an external evaluator who can also work as coach. The right person will be able to give advice on how your processes could be improved, as well as commenting on the evaluations and interpretations in the pilot project. Keep the committee informed about what happens, and prepare a progress report for the Rector or Dean.

9. Extend the system.

Plan for wider implementation, building on what you have learned from your pilot scheme. If things go well you may expand the system semester by semester, so that more and more groups become involved, and more of the evaluating and planning processes are introduced. You will need to proceed in stages and modify your plans as experience and confidence is gained in the new procedures.

ATTACHMENT 2

Key Performance Indicators

Standard/Broad Area	Key Performance Indicator	Level at Which Data is Required
Management of Quality Assurance and Improvement	1. Students overall evaluation on the quality of their learning experiences at the institution. (Average rating of the overall quality of their program on a five point scale in an annual survey of final year students.)	Program Institution Data separately for male and female sections and combined for all.
	2. Proportion of courses in which student evaluations were conducted during the year.	Department Institution Data separately for male and female sections and combined for all.
	3. Proportion of departments in which there was independent verification of standards of student achievement through internal processes during the past year.	College Institution
	4. Proportion of departments verifying achievement standards through external processes during the past year.	College Institution
Learning and Teaching	5. Ratio of students to teaching staff. (Based on full time equivalents)	Department or College (see note) Institution Data separately for male and female sections and combined for all.
	6. Students overall rating of the quality of their courses. (Average rating by students on a five point scale on overall evaluation of courses.)	Department or College (see note) College Institution Data separately for male and female sections and combined for all.
	7. Proportion of teaching staff with verified doctoral qualifications.	Department or College (see note) Institution Data separately for male and female sections and combined for all.
	8. Proportion of students entering preparatory program who successfully complete that program within the specified time.	Sections within prep year program if separate sections provided. Institution Data separately for male and

		female sections and combined for all.
	9. Percentage of full time undergraduate students who are eligible to proceed to second year after their first academic year.	Program/ College (See note) Institution Data separately for male and female sections and combined for all.
	10. Course completion rates for a. Full time students b. Part time students and c. Distance education students.	Program/Department/College (see note) Institution Data separately for male and female sections and combined for all.
	11. Proportion of full time students commencing undergraduate programs who complete those programs in minimum time specified for the program.	Program/Department/College (see note) Institution Data separately for male and female sections and combined for all.
	12. Apparent completion rate for undergraduate programs. a. Full time students b. Part time students and c. Distance education students. (Actual completion rate can be used if data is available)	Program/Department/College (see note) Institution Data separately for male and female sections and combined for all.
	13. Proportion of students entering post graduate programs who complete those programs in minimum time specified for the program.	Program/College (see note) Institution Data separately for male and female sections and combined for all.
	14. Proportion of graduates from undergraduate programs who within six months of graduation are: employed enrolled in further study not seeking employment or further study	Program College Institution Data separately for male and female sections and combined for all.
Student Administration and Support Services	15. Ratio of administrative and support staff to students.	College Institution Data separately for male and female sections and combined for all.
	16. Proportion of total operating funds (other than accommodation and student allowances) allocated to provision of student services.	Institution Data separately for male and female sections and combined for all.
	17. Student evaluation of academic and career counselling. (Average rating on the	Program College

	adequacy of academic and career counselling on a five point scale in an annual survey of final year students.	Institution Data separately for male and female sections and combined for all.
Learning Resources	18. Ratio of book titles held in the library to the number of students.	Institution Data separately for male and female sections and combined for all.
	19. Number of data base subscriptions as a proportion of the number of programs offered.	Institution
	20 Number of periodical subscriptions as a proportion of the number of programs offered.	Institution
	21. Student evaluation of library and learning resource services. (Average rating on adequacy of library and or learning resource services on a five point scale in an annual survey of final year students.) (See explanatory notes)	Institution Data separately for male and female sections and combined for all.
Facilities and Equipment	22. Annual expenditure on IT as a proportion of total operating funds.	Institution
	23. Number of accessible computer terminals per student.	Institution Data separately for male and female sections and combined for all.
	24. Average overall rating of adequacy of facilities and equipment in a survey of teaching staff.	Department College Institution Data separately for male and female sections and combined for all.
Financial Planning and Management	25. Total operating expenditure (other than accommodation and student allowances) per student.	Institution
Faculty and Staff Employment Processes	26. Proportion of teaching staff leaving the institution in the past year for reasons other than age retirement.	Department College Institution Data separately for male and female sections and combined for all.
	27 Proportion of teaching staff participating in at least one full day or equivalent of professional development activities arranged by the department, college or institution during the past year.	Department College Institution Data separately for male and female sections and combined for all.

Research	28 Number of refereed publications in the previous three years per full time members of teaching staff. (Publications based on the formula in the Higher Council Bylaw excluding conference presentations)	Department College Institution Data separately for male and female sections and combined for all.
	29. Number of citations in refereed journals to publications by full time teaching staff as a proportion of full time teaching staff.	Department College Institution Data separately for male and female sections and combined for all.
	30. Proportion of full time members of teaching staff with at least one refereed publication during the previous year.	Department College Institution Data separately for male and female sections and combined for all.
	31 Number of research articles published by graduate students or recent graduates based on their thesis research as a percentage of the number of postgraduate students.	Department College Institution Data separately for male and female sections and combined for all.
	32. Number of papers or reports presented at academic conferences during the past year per full time member of teaching staff.	Department College Institution Data separately for male and female sections and combined for all.
	33 Research income from external sources in the past year as a proportion of the number of full time teaching staff members.	Institution
	34. Proportion of total operating funds spent on research in the last financial year.	Institution
Community Service	35. Number of community education programs provided.	Department College Institution Data separately for male and female sections and combined for all.
	36. Number of hours of voluntary professional work spent in the community as a percentage of full time teaching staff.	Department College Institution Data separately for male and female sections and combined for all.

Note: In indicators 5 to 14 where the level at which data is required shows department/college, program/college, or program/department/college the larger administrative unit should be used where a substantial number of common courses are taken within the larger unit.

ATTACHMENT 2 (a)

Program Specification

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

**National Commission for Academic Accreditation &
Assessment**

Program Specification

Program Specification

For guidance on the completion of this template, please refer to Chapter 2, of Part 2 of this Handbook and to the Guidelines on Using the Template for a Program Specification in ATTACHMENT 3 (b).

Institution
College/Department
A. Program Identification and General Information
1 Program title and code
2. Total credit hours needed for completion of the program
3. Award granted on completion of the program
4. Major tracks/pathways or specializations within the program (e.g. transportation or structural engineering within a civil engineering program or counseling or school psychology within a psychology program)
5. Intermediate Exit Points and Awards (if any) (e.g. associate degree within a bachelor degree program)
6. Professions or occupations for which students are prepared. (If there is an early exit point from the program (e.g. diploma or associate degree) include professions or occupations at each exit point)
7. (a) New Program <input type="checkbox"/> Planned starting date <input type="text"/> (b) Continuing Program <input type="checkbox"/> Year of most recent major program review <input type="text"/> Organization involved in recent major review (e.g. internal within the institution, Accreditation review by _____? Other _____?
8 Name and position (e.g. department chair person) of faculty member managing or coordinating the program.
9. Location if not on main campus or locations if program is offered in more than one location.

2. List goals of the program for a specified period of time (e.g. 5 to 10 years)

3. List specific objectives for development of the program. (Objectives should be expressed in specific measurable terms with a date for achievement –normally up to 3 to 5 years)

4. List Key Performance Indicators to be used in monitoring the effectiveness and quality of the program. For each KPI indicate the source of the data to be provided and the person responsible for obtaining it. The list should include KPIs identified by the NCAAA that are relevant to individual programs and any additional KPIS specified by the institution or the college or department.

Key Performance Indicators	Source of Data/ Person Responsible

4. List any major changes or strategic new developments planned for the program within the next three to five years to help achieve its mission. For each change or development describe the major strategies to be followed and list the indicators that will be used to measure achievement.

Major Changes or Developments	Strategies	Indicators

D. Program Structure and Organization

Program Description

A program or department manual should be available for students or other stakeholders and a copy of the information relating to this program should be attached to the program specification.

This information should include required and elective courses, credit hour requirements and department/college and institution requirements, and details of courses to be taken in each year or semester.

2. Development of Special Student Characteristics or Attributes

List any special student characteristics or attributes beyond normal expectations that the institution, college or department is trying to develop in all of its students. (Normally one or two, up to a maximum of four that directly reflect the program mission and distinguish this program from others in the same field and make it exceptional. For example, graduates particularly good at creative problem solving, leadership capacity, commitment to public service, high level of skills in IT). For each special attribute indicate the teaching strategies and student activities to be used to develop it and the evidence to be used to assess whether it has been developed in all students.

Special Attributes	Strategies or Student Activities to be Used throughout the Program to Develop These Special Attributes
	Strategy
	Evidence
	Strategy

	Evidence
	Strategy
	Evidence
	Strategy
	Evidence

3. Required Field Experience Component (if any) (e.g. internship, cooperative program, work experience)

<p>Summary of practical, clinical or internship component required in the program. Note that a more detailed Field Experience Specification comparable to a course specification should also be prepared in a separate document for any field experience required as part of the program.</p>
<p>a. Brief description of field experience activity</p>
<p>b. List the major intended learning outcomes for the program to be developed through the field experience</p>
<p>c. At what stage or stages in the program does the field experience occur? (e.g. year, semester)</p>
<p>d. Time allocation and scheduling arrangement. (E.g. 3 days per week for 4 weeks, full time for one semester)</p>
<p>e. Number of credit hours</p>

4. Project or Research Requirements (if any)

<p>Summary of any project or thesis requirement in the program. (Other than projects or assignments within individual courses) (A copy of the requirements for the project should be attached.)</p>

a. Brief description
b. List the major intended learning outcomes of the project or research task.
c. At what stage or stages in the program is the project or research undertaken? (e.g. year, semester)
d. Number of credit hours
e. Summary description of provisions for student academic advising and support.
f. Description of assessment procedures (including mechanism for verification of standards)

5. Development of Learning Outcomes in Domains of Learning

<p>For each of the domains of learning shown below indicate: The knowledge or skill the program is intended to develop and the level of that knowledge and skill. (as a guide see general descriptions of knowledge and skills in the National Qualifications Framework for the qualification level of this program; The teaching strategies to be used in courses in the program to develop that knowledge and those skills. (This should be a general description of the approaches taken throughout the program but if particular responsibility is to be assigned to certain courses this should be indicated.); The methods of student assessment to be used in courses in the program to evaluate learning outcomes in the domain concerned.</p>
a. Knowledge
(i) Summary description of the knowledge to be acquired

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Teaching strategies to be used to develop that knowledge
--

Methods of assessment of knowledge acquired

b. Cognitive Skills

(i) Cognitive skills to be developed and level of performance expected
--

(ii) Teaching strategies to be used to develop these cognitive skills

Methods of assessment of students cognitive skills
c. Interpersonal Skills and Responsibility
Description of the level of interpersonal skills and capacity to carry responsibility to be developed
(ii) Teaching strategies to be used to develop these skills and abilities
Methods of assessment of students interpersonal skills and capacity to carry responsibility

d. Communication, Information Technology and Numerical Skills
(i) Description of the communication, IT and numerical skills to be developed
(ii) Teaching strategies to be used to develop these skills
(iii) Methods of assessment of students numerical and communication skills

e. Psychomotor Skills (if applicable)
Description of the psychomotor skills to be developed and the level of performance required
(ii) Teaching strategies to be used to develop these skills
Methods of assessment of students psychomotor skills

6. Admission Requirements for the program

Attach handbook or bulletin description of admission requirements including any course or experience prerequisites.

7. Attendance and Completion Requirements

Attach handbook or bulletin description of requirements for:

- Attendance.
- Progression from year to year.
- Program completion

E. Regulations for Student Assessment and Verification of Standards

1. Regulations or policies for allocation and distribution of grades

If the institution, college, department or program has policies or regulations dealing with the allocation or distribution of student's grades, state the policy or regulation, or attach a copy.

2. What processes will be used for verifying standards of achievement (e.g. check marking of sample of tests or assignments? Independent assessment by faculty from another institution) (Processes may vary for different courses or domains of learning.)

F Student Administration and Support
Student Academic Counseling

Describe arrangements to be made for academic counseling and advice for students, including both scheduling of faculty office hours and advice on program planning, subject selection and career planning (which might be available at college level)

2. Student Appeals

Attach regulations for student appeals on academic matters, including processes for consideration of those appeals.

G. Text and Reference Material

1. What process is to be followed by faculty in the program for planning and acquisition of text, reference and other resource material including electronic and web based resources?

2. What processes are to be followed by faculty in the program for evaluating the adequacy of book, reference and other resource provision?

H. Faculty and other Teaching Staff

1. Appointments

Summarize the process of employment of new teaching staff to ensure that they are appropriately qualified and experienced for their teaching responsibilities.

2. Participation in Program Planning, Monitoring and Review

Explain the process for consultation with and involvement of teaching staff in monitoring program quality, annual review and planning for improvement.

3. Professional; Development

What arrangements are made for professional development of teaching staff for:

(a) Improvement of skills in teaching?

(b) Other professional development including knowledge of research and developments in their field of teaching?

4. Preparation of New Teaching Staff

Describe the process used for orientation and/or induction of new, visiting or part time teaching staff to ensure full understanding of the program and the role of the course(s) they teach as components within it.

5. Part Time and Visiting Teaching Staff

Provide a summary of Program/Department/ College/institution policy on appointment of part time and visiting teaching staff. (i.e., Approvals required, selection process, proportion of total teaching staff etc.)

I. Program Evaluation and Improvement Processes

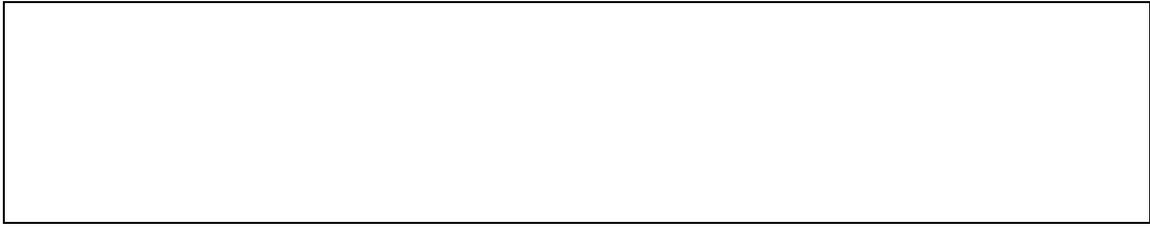
1. Effectiveness of Teaching

a. What processes will be used to evaluate and improve the strategies planned for developing learning in the different domains of learning? (e.g. assessment of learning achieved, advice on consistency with learning theory for different types of learning, assessment of understanding and skill of teaching staff in using different strategies)

b. What processes will be used for evaluating the skills of teaching staff in using the planned strategies?

2. Overall Program Evaluation

<p>a. What strategies will be used in the program for obtaining assessments of the overall quality of the program and achievement of its intended learning outcomes:</p>
<p>(i) From current students and graduates of the program?</p>
<p>(ii) From independent advisors and/or evaluator(s)?.</p>
<p>(iii) From employers and/or other stakeholders.</p>
<p>b. What processes will be used to gather and record data on key performance indicators for the quality and effectiveness of the program?</p>
<p>c. What processes will be followed for reviewing these assessments and planning action to improve the program?</p>



Attachments

1. Copies of regulations and other documents referred to in template preceded by a table of contents.
2. Course specifications for all courses including field experience specification if applicable.
3. Learning outcomes for the program if more extended listing is needed. (See item 5 and reference to that item in Guidelines on Using the Template for a Program Specification.
4. Course Planning Matrix

Allocation of Responsibilities for Learning Outcomes to Courses

Learning Outcomes	Courses																			
Course Code and Number																				
Knowledge Facts Concepts, theories Procedures																				
Cognitive Skills Apply skills when asked Creative thinking and problem solving																				
Interpersonal Skills and Responsibility																				
Responsibility for own learning																				
Group participation and leadership																				
Act responsibly-personal and professional situations																				
Ethical standards of behavior																				
Communication IT and Numerical Skills																				
Oral and written communication																				
Use of IT																				
Basic math and statistics																				

Psychomotor Skills																				
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√ Major Responsibility x Minor Responsibility

(Note: Add additional sheets if necessary to provide for all required courses in the program including any courses offered by other departments)

ATTACHMENT 2 (b)
Guidelines on Using the Template for a Program Specification

Institution, College/Department	Show the name of institution and the college or department principally responsible for the program.
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A Program Identification and General Information	
1. Program title and code	Insert the title and the institutional code number for the program.
2. Credit hours	Write the number of credit hours required to complete the program. If there are variations in the credit hours for different majors or tracks in the program these details should be shown.
3. Award granted on completion of the Program	Write the title of the academic award or qualification granted by the institution for students who complete the program.
4. Major tracks/pathways within the program	Write the title of any major tracks or pathways within the program. A major track or pathway is one in which a specified group of courses are undertaken, normally in the second half of a program, and that lead to a specialization that is recognized by the institution. Individual selection by a student among a number of elective courses would not be regarded as a major track or pathway.
5. Intermediate Exit Points and Awards	If the program is designed so that a student can complete an award part way through a longer program and then continue in the longer program write the title and number of required credit hours for any such intermediate award. An example could be an associate degree program that provided valuable employment skills that also provided a basis for continuing studies to complete a bachelor's degree.
6. Professions/occupations for which students are prepared	Write the name of any professions or occupations the program is designed to prepare students for. (Note that students may enter other occupations or professions. However this item relates to what the program is designed for, not what individual students may eventually do)
7. New or Continuing Program	Indicate whether this is a new or continuing program. If it is a new program indicate the proposed commencing date. If it is a continuing program indicate the year in which the program was evaluated in a major review. The kind of review this item refers to could be a major self study for accreditation, or a major review by the institution itself.
8. Faculty Member responsible for the	Write the name of the person responsible for coordinating the program and the position held by that person. This may

program	be the head of department or another person given that responsibility.
9. Location(s) where the program is offered	If the program is offered away from the main campus indicate the location. If it is on the main campus leave this item blank. If it is offered in several locations provide details. If the program is offered both through distance education and on campus this should be indicated in the template. It should be noted that there are additional special requirements and standards that relate to delivery of a program through distance education. (Template for distance education programs is not yet available)
<p>B Program Context</p> <p>This section is intended to explain the need for the program and indicate any significant elements of the context in which it is being offered that affect the way it should be planned and delivered</p>	
<p>1. Explain why the program is needed</p> <p>a. Economic cultural, technical or other reasons</p> <p>b. Relevance to the mission of the institution.</p>	<p>This should be a general explanation of why the program is important</p> <p>a. Briefly describe reasons the program is needed that may relate to the local, national or international economic systems, social or cultural needs, policy developments etc and the benefits to the community that will be provided by offering the program.</p> <p>b. Explain how the program relates to the mission of the institution or college. (i.e. is it consistent with the mission and does it make a significant contribution to its achievement?)</p>
2. Relationship to other programs.	<p>Explain how the program relates to other programs in the college or university—e.g. Are any courses in this program taken as preparatory or service courses for students in other programs or do the students in this program have to take courses provided through other programs or departments?</p> <p>In such cases an indication should be given of what is done to make sure the courses concerned actually provide the skills and knowledge that are needed.</p>
3. Do the students likely to be enrolled have any special characteristics that should be considered in the program? If yes, what are they?	Briefly describe any special characteristics students enrolling in the program are likely to have that could affect what needs to be done in the program. For example they may have limited skill in IT, or previous educational experiences that do not prepare them adequately for the more independent learning requirements expected on a higher education campus.
4. What should be done in the program	For each special characteristic identified under 3. indicate what response should be made in the program to meet these

<p>because of these special characteristics that students are expected to have.</p>	<p>special requirements. For example—If students are likely to have limited understanding of mathematical skills in a program that builds on those skills, special introductory mathematics training maybe needed followed by tutorial assistance for those who need it. If students have backgrounds in memory based studies with limited independent study skills, or are likely to become confused or frustrated by independent problem solving tasks, an orientation program that demonstrates the importance of these objectives followed by progressive introduction of new forms of study may be needed. Early courses offered in the program should be designed to help with transition and include counseling and assistance with study skills.</p>
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<p>Mission and Goals of the Program</p>	
<p>1. Program Mission Statement</p>	<p>Provide a brief summary statement of the mission of the program. (This could be a modification of a mission statement for the college or department referring more specifically to what this program is expected to develop.)</p>
<p>2. Major changes or strategic developments.</p>	<p>List any major changes or strategic developments that have been identified for the development of the program over a period of three to five years. (A longer or shorter time frame would be acceptable) For each change or development shown list the main strategies to be followed and the indicators to be used to assess the impact of the change. A more detailed strategic plan and operational plans should be available for reference. The response to this item is likely to be different for a new program and for an existing one. For a new program the major developments may reflect the key stages in implementation and critical success factors in achieving the mission. For an existing program the changes may result from plans for improvement following a quality evaluation, new policy initiatives or technological developments. (Note that this item relates to the development and improvement of the program, not the learning outcomes for students which are referred to later. For example the program may be being changed to include greater use of IT skills and web based reference material, new teaching strategies may be in the process of being introduced to develop problem solving skills, closer relationships may be being developed with professional bodies or employers through a stronger and more clearly defined cooperative</p>

	program)
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Program Structure and Organization	
1. Program Description	Attach the program description as set out in the handbook or bulletin.
2. Development of Special Student Characteristics or Attributes	If the institution or the college has decided to develop special characteristics or attributes in its students as part of its mission, or if this has been done by the department, list each one and describe what will be done in the program to develop it. What is wanted is not the learning outcomes that would be generally expected from a program of this type, but something special that will differentiate it from what is done elsewhere and hopefully make it noticeably better. (For example if the program planners are wanting to produce graduates who are particularly good at problem solving, have excellent language skills, or be potential leaders in the community these things should be stated and the Strategies column should describe what will be done in the program to make sure these special abilities are developed. Planned strategies or student activities may include special emphases in teaching and use of particular teaching techniques throughout the program, specially designed student activities. Evidence to be used should always include some appropriate mechanisms to assess whether those special characteristics are actually being developed and are recognized by students and the community.)
3. Field Experience Component	This item should be completed if the program includes a field experience component. A field experience component could take a variety of forms including one or more solid blocks of time in a field setting, part time experience during an academic semester, a summer program in a work experience placement, or an internship at the end of a program that is regarded as part of the program. Work assignments that are part of a regular on campus course would not normally be regarded as “field experience” for the purposes of a program specification. What is wanted here in the program specification is a very brief description. Full details should be shown in a separate field experience specification.
a. Brief description of field experience	Briefly describe the nature of the field experience activity including the kinds of activity in which students will be involved, how their performance will be assessed and the locations where it will take place.

b. Specify the major learning outcomes	Summarize the learning outcomes to be developed. These should be grouped according to the domains of learning. (Knowledge, Cognitive Skills, Interpersonal Skills and Responsibility etc.)
c. Stage in the program when the field activity occurs	Indicate when within the program the field experience activity takes place. If the program includes several field experience activities indicate the stage for each. For example a program might include a fairly short period of observation in first or second year, followed by a longer and more extensive cooperative program in the final year.
d. Time allocation and scheduling arrangement	Explain how the field experience activity is scheduled and the amount of time allocated.
e. Number of credit hours	Indicate the number of credit hours allocated for the field experience activity.
4. Project or Research Requirements (if any)	If a project or research task is required a copy of the relevant regulation or statement of requirements should be attached. The items below relate to particular elements necessary for program planning purposes.
a. Brief description	Provide a summary description of the task the students are required to undertake.
b. Major learning outcomes to be developed.	Summarize the learning outcomes to be developed. These should be grouped according to the domains of learning. (Knowledge, Cognitive Skills, Interpersonal Skills and Responsibility etc.)
c. Stage in program when project is undertaken	Indicate the stage in the program when students undertake the project or research study.
d. Number of credit hours	Indicate the number of credit hours allocated for the project or research study.
e. Summary description of provisions for student advice and support	Briefly describe the arrangements made for advising and assisting students and level of support available.
f. Description of assessment procedures	Explain the process used for assessing students work including steps taken to verify the standards of students' achievement.

<p>5. Development of Learning Outcomes in Domains of Learning</p>	<p>In responding to this item reference should be made to the National Qualifications Framework which includes descriptions of the level of knowledge and skill in expected in each domain for each qualification level. The statements made here should be consistent with those general descriptions but should express the intended outcomes in ways that relates to the program field of study. The statements may be elaborated in more detail in the specifications for each course to indicate special contributions a course might make to the development of these learning outcomes.</p> <p>This template calls for a summary that is in sufficient detail to identify the general strategies for teaching and assessment to develop and assess different forms of learning. A more detailed statement of learning outcomes to be used as a basis for the detailed planning of courses may be attached.</p> <p>For each domain three things should be included. A description of the level of knowledge or skill to be achieved, the teaching strategies to be used to develop that form of learning, and the way students learning should be assessed. The description of teaching strategies should include enough detail to guide instructors in the strategies to be used in the program. In other words, not just lectures, group work, laboratories etc, but a comment on how these types of activities should be used to maximize learning in each of the domains and cumulatively improve the skills and abilities the program is intended to develop. The same types of activity could be used for several different kinds of learning outcomes. For example lectures could be used for both knowledge and cognitive skills. However some comment should be included to indicate how the lectures would be used differently (or other activities associated with them) so the different kinds of learning will be achieved.</p>
<p>(a) Knowledge</p>	
<p>(i) Learning Outcome</p>	<p>Summarize the areas and levels of knowledge to be developed in the program. This should be a broad description only. Details of various areas of knowledge will be shown in course specifications.</p>

(ii) Teaching strategies	Describe the procedures to be used in the courses in the program for students to acquire and understand the knowledge the program is intended to develop. Example—Combination of lectures, tutorials and individual and group assignments using print media and web based materials. Lectures begin with overview of content to be presented linking it to previous information and explaining its significance, and conclude with a review. Tutorials review material presented in lectures to check understanding and provide clarification required before discussing the potential uses of the information. Essay assignments require students to locate and use significant information in the field.
(iii) Assessment	Describe the procedures to be used to assess students' acquisition of knowledge. Example—Multiple choice tests four times each semester in each course with results carrying 20% of final assessment. End of semester examination with a combination of multiple choice and essay items.
(b) Cognitive Skills	
(i) Learning Outcome	Summarize the thinking and problem solving abilities to be developed in the program taking into account the settings in which those abilities should be used.— e.g.. in later professional work, in higher degree study etc.
(ii) Teaching strategies	Describe the processes to be used in courses in the program to develop the cognitive skills the program is designed to develop. This should include ability to use analytical and problem solving skills in problem solving when requested to do so and also spontaneously when appropriate in other settings. It should include strategies to assist students to manage and improve their own thinking processes. Example—Laboratory and assignment tasks apply skills to new problems. Tutorials include discussion of issues and problems to which analytical skills taught could be relevant. Assignments include some open ended problem solving tasks with students assessed on the appropriateness of investigative processes used. Program includes a capstone group problem solving task in final year in which analytical skills and theoretical insights developed in the program are applied to a new issue.

(iii) Assessment	<p>Describe how students' ability to use cognitive skills will be assessed.</p> <p>Example—Each test given during semester to include at least one item requiring students to apply formulae or conceptual insight in solution of a new problem. End of semester test in each course to include items requiring students to identify and use appropriate analytical tools for a new problem. Assessment of final year capstone group problem solving task has 40% of assessment based on appropriate choice and use of appropriate investigative methodology, and includes mark bonus for creativity on solution.</p>
(c) Interpersonal Skills and Responsibility	
(i) Learning Outcome	<p>Summarize the abilities that should be developed in areas of group participation and leadership, personal and social responsibility, and exercise of responsibility for their own continuing learning. These should include ethical and moral responsibility in a general sense as might be expected for all learners as well as any special requirements associated with the field of study.</p>
(ii) Teaching strategies	<p>Describe the processes to be used in courses in the program to develop students' interpersonal skills, habits of responsible behavior, and capacity for independent learning.</p> <p>Example—Each course includes at least one group project with a randomly selected team leader. Instructors give mid task counseling on approach taken. Assessments include evaluation of standard of report by group and individual performance rating on contribution made.</p> <p>Each course includes individual assignment task with level of research requirement increasing in each year of the program.</p> <p>Ethical issues considered in case study and role play tasks with group analysis and comment on their appropriate resolution.</p>
(iii) Assessment	<p>Describe how students' development of interpersonal skills and responsibility, and their capacity for independent learning will be assessed.</p> <p>Example—Assessment of group assignments within each course and in the capstone project includes an individual component for the contribution of each person. Individual project assignments in courses require independent study skills and assessments of those assignments include this element.</p>

(d) Communication, Information Technology and Numerical Skills	
(i) Learning Outcome	Summarize the oral and written communication skills, and the information and communication skills and the mathematical and statistical to be included in the program. (Note that these are intended as general skills that all students should have regardless of their field of study. If the program is in one of these particular fields (e.g. in a mathematics or computer science program) the level of skills in that field should be much higher than would be expected of everyone. The more advanced skills expected of students in such a program should be included as knowledge or cognitive skills and should not be repeated in this section.)
(ii) Teaching strategies	Describe the processes to be used to develop these abilities and ensure that they are supported and developed in courses throughout the program. Example—Preliminary study skills course in first semester. Coaching facilities available in each year of the program with students enrolling voluntarily or on referral. Some courses in each year include required use of ICT for analysis and reporting, with quality of usage forming part of assessment. Assignments include required use of search engines on the internet.
(iii) Assessment	Describe how adequacy of students' ability to use numerical and communication skills will be assessed. Example—Direct assessment of basic skills in preliminary study skills course with follow up assessments for those who need it. Appropriate use of communication skills including language and use of IT included as component of assessment in all student assignments.
(e) Psychomotor Skills (if applicable)	
(i) Learning Outcome	If the program is one in which psychomotor skills are significant objectives the skills to be developed should be described and the level of performance indicated.
(ii) Teaching strategies	If program objectives include psychomotor skills describe the strategies to be used to develop these during the program.
(iii) Assessment	Describe the process for assessment of students' psychomotor skills.
6. Admission Requirements	Description of admission requirements should be attached as requested.

7. Attendance and Completion Requirements	Description of attendance and completion requirements should be attached as requested.
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Regulations for Student Assessments and Verification of Standards	
1. Regulation or Policy on allocation and distribution of grades	The policy and/or regulation on allocation and distribution of student grades should be included in the specification. The policy or regulation should be attached or if it is included in other regulations as part of a larger document a summary of the main provisions should be included in the specification.
3. What processes will be used for verifying standards of achievement?	Explain what will be done to compare the level of performance of students with appropriate external benchmarks. Action may be different for different domains of learning. Possibilities include such things as arranging with faculty from another highly regarded institution to remark a random selection of student assignments without seeing the original mark given, getting an independent rating of the standard of difficulty of a sample of tests, arranging with another institution for one or two common test items to be included and comparing the marks given.

F. Student Administration and Support	
1. Student Academic Counseling	Describe the arrangements made for individual academic counseling and advice for students. The description should include both general advising such as advice on course selection and career planning, and individual consultations between instructors and students in courses during scheduled office hours. The description of arrangements should also include information about mechanisms to ensure that planned arrangements for providing advice to students actually take place and how useful they are for students.
2. Student Appeals	Regulations for academic appeals should be attached. In some cases general institutional processes are supplemented by special arrangements relevant to certain types of program . If there are any special mechanisms applicable to this program the additional details should be explained.

Text and Reference Material

1. Processes for planning and acquisition	Describe the process to be followed for selecting text and reference material and arranging for provision of needed materials in the resource center or elsewhere as appropriate. The description should include timelines for these planning and organizational tasks.
2. Process for evaluating adequacy of provision	Describe the process to be followed. This would normally include feedback from students and faculty, and timelines for evaluations and decisions to be made in response.

H. Faculty and Other Teaching Staff	
1. Appointments	Summarize the process for appointment of new teaching staff including the action in the department to ensure that appointees have the qualifications and skills to meet teaching requirements. The description should include what is done to verify that qualifications claimed are legitimate.
2 Participation in program planning , monitoring and review.	Describe what is done to involve teaching staff in these activities. If work is done through committees the description should include how such faculty are selected for involvement and how others not on committees are involved.
3. Professional development	Describe arrangements made for improvements in teaching skills and for general professional development. These arrangements could involve both activities managed by the program or department and any activities organized through the institution. The description should include an indication of the proportions of faculty expected to be involved in various activities.
4. Preparation of New Teaching Staff	Explain what is done to ensure that new or visiting teaching staff are given an orientation to the institution and to the program, and made aware of the expectations for teaching the courses for which they will be responsible. This includes the recommended teaching strategies, forms of student assessment etc designed for program objectives, and the mechanisms to be used for course and program evaluations.
5. Part Time or Visiting Teaching Staff	Summarize the relevant policy or regulation to indicate the extent to which part time or visiting faculty can be used, approval requirements, etc.

Program Evaluation and Improvement Processes	
1. Effectiveness of Teaching	

a. Processes to be used to evaluate and improve the teaching strategies planned for different domains of learning in the program	Describe what will be done to review and improve the recommended teaching strategies. Examples—Comments and suggestions from faculty (after having completed training in the use of the strategies), consultancy by a curriculum/teaching methodology specialist, analysis of student evaluations, training program in learning theory and related teaching methodology.
b. Processes for evaluating the skills of faculty in using the planned teaching strategies.	Describe evaluation processes. Examples—Student course evaluations, observations by program coordinator or department head, tests of students skills with standards verified by external benchmarks, graduating students ratings of the most (and least) effective courses in developing needed knowledge and skill.
2. Overall Program Evaluation	
a. Strategies for obtaining assessments of the quality of the program and its success in achieving intended learning outcomes.	Describe the processes to be followed in obtaining feedback on the quality of the program from each of the following sources.
(i) From current students and graduates from the program.	Examples—Survey responses from students about to complete the program, Surveys of graduates from the program using a standard form distributed six months after graduation, focus group discussion with randomly selected groups of graduates.
(ii) from independent advisors and/or external evaluator(s)	Examples—Departmental/program review, Analysis and advice from visiting faculty, international accreditation by a specialist accreditor. Independent assessment by independent faculty familiar with the program of the programs consistency with the National Qualifications Framework.
(iii) from employers and other stakeholders	Examples—Survey of employers of graduates, focus group discussion with employers of graduates, Formation of an advisory group made up of leading practitioners in the profession concerned to review program.

<p>b. Key performance indicators</p>	<p>List specific items of information in quantifiable form that will be used each year as indicators of quality. These may include some items that are reported on for all programs in the institution so the institution can monitor quality of programs generally, as well as some that are applicable only to the particular program. The indicators should relate to important aspects of quality, but in most cases will require interpretation in analysis to take account of different circumstances. Examples—Completion rate of students in first year, program completion rates in minimum time, student ratings of the value of the program in a survey, employment rates of graduates, participation of faculty in professional development activities.</p>
<p>c. Processes for reviewing these assessments and planning action for improvement</p>	<p>Describe what will be done to evaluate comments and reports received under a and b above and plan responses to the evaluations received. Examples—Faculty invited to comment on responses to course and program evaluations (confidentiality of individual responses preserved). Program reports prepared at end of each semester including summaries of evaluation responses, and reviewed by program evaluation committee which advises on amendments required. Completion of self evaluation scales from Standards of Good Practice once every second year with results retained in program files and ratings recorded in a time series.</p>

Attachment Course Planning Matrix

The course planning matrix is a planning device for identifying courses in which special attention should be given to certain learning outcomes, particularly those relating to interpersonal skills and responsibility and communication ICT and numeracy skills.

It is normally expected that each course will have responsibility for certain areas of knowledge and for thinking skills and problem solving relating to the subject matter of the course. It is also expected that most courses will be expected to reinforce learning of independent study skills, capacity to work effectively in groups, use of IT in communication and so on. However it is essential that special attention be given to these things at certain stages in the program, even if they do not flow directly from what would normally be regarded as the content of a particular course. For example it will be important that in first year at least one of the instructors spend some time on the requirements for citing references in essays and reports and the services and resources available in the library. If effective group processes are to be developed in the program (as they should) special attention should be given to these skills in at least one course at an early stage in the program, and then reinforced appropriately in other courses in later years.

The selection of courses in which special attention should be given may relate in part to the particular content requirements of different courses, or to the skills and interests of different instructors.

ATTACHMENT 2 (c)

Annual Program Report

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

**The National Commission for Academic Accreditation &
Assessment**

ANNUAL PROGRAM REPORT

Annual program reports should be prepared by the program coordinator in consultation with faculty teaching in the program or a program committee. The reports are provided to the head of department or college, and used as the basis for any modifications or changes that are required in the program. They should be retained on file to provide a record of developments in the program for use in periodic program self-studies and external reviews for accreditation.

Where reference is made to advice or comment from an independent evaluator, advice should be obtained from a person familiar with the program who is not directly involved in its delivery.

Annual Program Report

Institution
College/ Department

A. General Information

Program title and code
Name of program coordinator
Date of report
Academic year to which this report applies.
Location if not on main campus or locations if program is offered in more than one location.

B Statistical Information

1. Number of students who started the first year of the program in the year c <input style="width: 50px;" type="text"/> d:			
2. Number of students completing the program in the year concerned:			
Completing the final year of the program: <input style="width: 50px;" type="text"/>			
Completing major tracks within the program (if applicable) <input style="width: 50px;" type="text"/>			
Title.....No			<input style="width: 50px;" type="text"/>
Title.....No			<input style="width: 50px;" type="text"/>
Title.....No			<input style="width: 50px;" type="text"/>
Title.....No			<input style="width: 50px;" type="text"/>
Completing an intermediate award specified as an early exit point (if any)			
3. Apparent completion rate.			
Percentage of students completing the full program (Number shown in 2 (a) as a percentage of the number that started the full program in that student intake.			<input style="width: 50px;" type="text"/>
(b) Percentage of students completing an intermediate award (if any) (e.g. Associate degree within a bachelor degree program) (Number shown in 2 (b) as a percentage of the number that started the program leading to that award in that student intake.)			<input style="width: 50px;" type="text"/>
Comment on any special or unusual factors that might have affected the apparent completion rates. (e.g. Transfers between intermediate and full program, transfers to or from other programs)			
4. Number and percentage of students passing each year of the program.			
	Number Starting	Number Completing and Passing	Percent Completing and Passing
Year 1			

Year 2			
Year 3			
Year 4			

.Year to year progression rates .^o

Proportion of students who started each year level in the previous year who passed and continued to a higher year level the current year.

Started in Year 1 and continued to start in Year 2 %

Started in Year 2 and continued to start in Year 3 %

Started in Year 3 and continued to start in Year 4 %

6. Special factors outside the control of the program (if any) affecting the numbers completing the year and continuing in the following year.

7. Destination of graduates as shown in survey of graduating students (Include this information in years in which a survey of employment outcomes for graduating students is conducted)

Date of Survey

Number Surveyed Number Responding Response Rate %

Destination	Not available for Employment		Available for Employment		
	Further Study	Other Reasons	Employed in Subject Field	Other Employment	Unemployed
Number					
Percent of Respondents					

Comment on significance of percentages. (e.g. Comparison with past results, results at other institutions, nature of job market, implications for program planning)

C. Program Context

Significant changes within the institution affecting the program (if any) during the past

<p>two years.</p> <p>Implications for the program</p>
<p>2. Significant changes external to the institution affecting the program (if any) during the past two years.</p> <p>Implications for the program</p>

D. Course Information Summary

<p>Course Results Attach a list of all courses taught during the semester/year showing for each course the number commencing, the number completing, and the distribution of grades (A, B, C, etc.)</p>

<p>2. Analysis of Unusual Results. List any courses where the proportion completing or passing the course, or the distribution of grades, was unusually high or low, or departed from policies on grades or assessments. For each such course indicate what was done to investigate, the reason for the difference, and what action has been taken as a result. (Include or attach additional summaries if necessary)</p>	
a. Course	Variation
Investigation Undertaken	
Reason for Difference	
Action Taken (if Required)	
b. Course	Variation
Investigation Undertaken	

Reason for Difference	
Action Taken (if Required)	
c. Course	Variation
Investigation Undertaken	
Reason for Difference	
Action Taken (if Required)	

(Attach additional summaries if necessary)

4. Delivery of Planned Courses

(a) List any courses that were planned but not taught and indicate the reason and what will need to be done if any compensating action is required.		
Course title and code	Explanation	Compensating action if required

(b) Compensating Action Required for Units of Work Not Taught in Courses that were Offered. (Complete only where units not taught were of sufficient importance to require some compensating action)
--

Course	Unit of work	Reason
Compensating action if required		
Course	Unit of work	Reason
Compensating action if required		
Course	Unit of work	Reason
Compensating action if required		
Course	Unit of work	Reason
Compensating action if required		

F Program Management and Administration

List difficulties (if any) encountered in management of the program	Impact of difficulties on the achievement of the program objectives	Proposed action to avoid future difficulties in Response

E. Summary Program Evaluation

<p>1. Graduating Students Evaluation (To be reported on in years when surveys are undertaken)</p> <p>Date of Survey <input type="text"/></p> <p>Attach survey results</p>	
<p>a. List most important criticisms, strengths and suggestions</p>	<p>Comment (e.g. Valid comment, action already taken, other considerations, etc.)</p>
<p>b. Changes proposed in program (if any) in response to this feedback.</p>	

<p>2. Other Evaluation (e.g. Evaluations by employers or other stakeholders, external review))</p> <p>Describe evaluation process</p>	
<p>a. List most important criticisms, strengths and suggestions</p>	<p>Comment (e.g. Comment is valid and action will be taken, action already taken, other considerations, etc.)</p>

b. Changes proposed in program (if any) in response to this feedback.

2. Ratings on Quality Standards (Refer to Quality Standards for Higher Education Programs.)

(a) Attach rating scales for Learning and Teaching, and other scales used for program evaluation. (To be reported on in years when rating scales are first completed and in later years when a comprehensive evaluation is undertaken)

(b). List sub-scales selected for annual monitoring. (normally those where the practice is not followed but is considered a priority for development, or which were assessed as in need of improvement (rating of less than three stars) Indicate action proposed to improve performance (if any).

Sub-Scale	Practice Followed	Star Rating	In first year in which scales are completed indicate action proposed In later years, comment on performance in the year of the report.

(Add items or attach list if necessary)					

<p>2. Effectiveness of teaching strategies. Comment on the effectiveness of teaching strategies planned for use in courses for the type of learning involved in each of the domains of learning. (See description of domains in National Qualifications Framework and the proposed strategies in item D 2. in the Program Specification.) (Note this question is not an assessment of the skills of instructors, but an evaluation of the planned strategies based on instructors course reports.)</p>	
<p>Summary of comments by instructors or other feedback on the effectiveness of teaching strategies for domains of learning outcomes indicating any difficulties encountered, and suggestions for improvement.</p>	<p>Planned response to comments (e.g., training and assistance provided, modification in planned strategies) (When appropriate refer to particular courses where changes are to be made)</p>
<p>a. Knowledge</p>	
<p>b. Cognitive skills</p>	
<p>c. Interpersonal skills and responsibility</p>	

d. Communication, IT and numerical skills	
e. Psychomotor skills (if applicable)	

3. Orientation programs for new teaching staff

Orientation programs provided Yes No If offered, how many participated?

a. Brief Description

b. Summary of evaluations by staff who participated in the orientation program.

If orientation programs were not provided, give reasons.

4. Professional Development Activities for Teaching and Other Staff a. Activities Provided	How many Participated	
	Teaching Staff	Other Staff
b. Summary comments on usefulness of activities based on participants evaluations		

H. Independent Opinion on Quality of the Program after Considering Draft Report (e.g. head of another department offering comment on evidence received and conclusions reached) (Attach notes)

1. Matters Raised by Person Giving Opinion	Comment by Program coordinator on Matters Raised

2. Implications for Planning for the Program

I. Action Plan

1 Progress on Implementation of Previous Year's Action Plans			
Actions Planned	Completion Date	Person Responsible	Completed or not completed
a.			
Reason if not completed as planned.			

b.			
Reason if not completed as planned			

c.			
Reason if not completed as planned			

d.			

Reason if not completed as planned

2. Proposals for Program Development

a. Proposals for Changes to Program Structure (units/credit-hours, compulsory or optional courses, other)

b. Proposals for Changes to Courses, (deletions and additions of units or topics, changes in teaching or assessment procedures etc.)

c. Development Activities for Teaching and Other Staff

3. New Action Plan for Academic Year _____

Actions Required	Completion Date	Person Responsible

--	--	--

Program Coordinator: _____ -

Signature: _____ Date Report Completed: _____

Received by _____ (Dean/Department Head)

Date _____

Attachments

Summary of Data on Program Key Performance Indicators

Copy of all course reports

Rating scales applicable to the program from the Self Evaluation Scales for Higher Education Programs that were completed this year (See Item E 2)

Summary of any evaluations by graduates or other stakeholders in this year (See item E 1)

Independent evaluators report

Key Performance Indicators

List KPIs stated in the Program Specification (See item C3 of Program Specification) show result for the year concerned. (Note that some of this data will also be required for response to specific questions later in this report)

Key Performance Indicators	Result Obtained

ATTACHMENT 2 (d)

Guidelines on Using the Template for an Annual Program Report

Descriptions of what should be included in program and course specifications and in the annual and periodic reports are included in Chapter 2 of Part 2 of this Handbook

Institution, College/Department	Show the name of the institution and the college or department principally responsible for the course.
A. General Information	
1. Program title and code	Write the title and institutional code number for the program
2. Name of program coordinator	Write the name of the program coordinator. If the report is prepared by someone other than the coordinator, that person's name should also be included.
3. Date of report	Write the date on which the report is completed.
4. Academic year to which this report applies	Write the academic year.
5. Location of program if not on main campus	Indicate the location if not on the main campus. If the program is offered both on the main campus and in another location details should be provided. If it is offered in several locations (for example in another town or city or separately on both men's and women's campuses) information should be provided separately for each location and evaluations should consider the significance of any differences in quality that are shown.
B. Statistical Information Note: Organizational arrangements for programs differ and these tables may need to be modified to meet particular requirements. For example students may complete general studies in a broad field in the first years at the institution before deciding on entry to particular programs within a college or department. Progression and completion rates within a program, and progression and completion rates for the students total program including the general and specialized studies are both significant in considering quality and additional tables may be needed to provide full information. Trends over time are important, and notes should be kept on any variations to the tables to meet particular requirements to ensure they are completed in consistent ways.	
1. Number of students starting the first year of the program	Write the number of students who started the first year of the program in the year for which the report is prepared.
2. Number of students completing: a. the final year b. any intermediate	Complete the table to indicate the number of students who completed the final year of the program in the year for which the report is prepared, an intermediate award as part of the program (for example if there is a diploma or an

award c. major tracks	associate degree that students could qualify for part way through a bachelor degree program, and any major tracks within the program.
3. Apparent completion rates	Show apparent completion rates for the full program and for an intermediate award if one exists. (Trends in apparent completion rates are affected if changes occur in the extent to which students move between programs or extend their studies over a longer period. Consequently any changes of this sort should be noted in interpreting and commenting of the figures.)
4. Number and percentage of students passing each year of the program	Complete table showing numbers and percentages starting, completing and passing each year.
5. Year to year progression rates	Provide figures showing year to year progression rates.
6. Special factors affecting completion and progression rates	Describe any unusual events or special circumstances that might have affected completion and progression rates in this year.
7. Destination of Graduates	If a survey of graduates was conducted with information provided on their destinations provide details obtained from the survey and comment on their significance. Particular importance should be given to comparisons with information from similar surveys elsewhere and to trends in results. However interpretations should take current economic circumstances into account.
C. Program Context	
1. Changes within the institution affecting the program	Note any significant changes in the institution affecting the program and comment on their implications for the program.
2. Changes external to the institution affecting the program	Note any significant changes external to the program and comment on their significance. For example changes in economic circumstances affecting demand for graduates or skills required, changes in government policies, new programs introduced in other institutions, etc.
D. Course Information Summary	
1. Course results	Attach a list of all courses taught indicating numbers starting and completing each course, and the distribution of grades.
2. Analysis of Unusual Results	Complete table for any courses where the proportions completing or passing or the distribution of grades was unusually high or low or departed from department, college or institutional policies.
3. Comparison of	Complete table to compare planned and actual enrolments in

planned or actual enrolments	the program. If relevant the table could be repeated for major tracks within the program
4. Delivery of Planned Courses	
(a) Courses planned but not taught	Complete table to record any courses that were planned but not taught indicating reasons and compensating action if required. For example if the course was a core component of the program but an instructor was not available or insufficient students were enrolled to make it viable it may have to be rescheduled and action taken to ensure viability in the future.
(b) Units of work not taught in courses offered.	After considering course reports note any important units of work that were not covered as planned indicating reasons and any compensating action that may be required. For example if the unit was a prerequisite for later studies it might have to be included as an extra topic in a later course.
E. Summary Program Evaluation	
1. Graduating students Evaluation	In any year in which a survey of graduates was undertaken attach survey results and provide information on the most important strengths, weaknesses and suggestions for improvements, comments on the results from faculty, and suggestions for response.
2. Ratings on Quality Standards	It is expected that those responsible for planning the program will complete the relevant rating scales in Standards for Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Higher Education Programs initially to provide a quality benchmark against which to assess future developments, and that they will complete them again periodically (every two or three years) Based on the initial assessments and planning priorities certain sub scales should be selected for annual monitoring and reporting.
(a) Attach Completed Rating Scales	In any year in which all the relevant scales are completed the completed document should be attached to the program report. If they are completed for male and female sections both sets of scales should be attached.
(b) Report on sub-scales selected for annual monitoring	Complete table to indicate ratings and comments on the items selected for annual monitoring after earlier consideration of priorities for improvement. If there are significant differences between sections this should be noted.
3. Employer and Stakeholder comment on skills of graduates	Complete this item in any year in which surveys or significant consultations took place.
a. List the most important criticisms,	Comments should include analysis and interpretation by teaching staff or others dealing with such things as the

strengths and suggestions and provide comment.	validity of and reasons for concerns, situational factors that could have influenced comments, and priorities for improvement etc.
b. Changes proposed in program (if any)	List any changes proposed in response to the concerns, suggestions and comments received. These should be considered along with other feedback in developing an action plan to be commented on under item I.
F. Quality of Teaching	
1. a. List of courses and evaluations undertaken	List courses taught during the year and indicate for each course whether student or other evaluations were undertaken and whether any action is planned in response to those evaluations.
b. General Response	Explain any general response to the course evaluations that does not result directly from the evaluation of particular courses.
2. Effectiveness of teaching strategies	This item is intended as a review of the effectiveness of the teaching strategies planned for use in the program to develop learning in the different domains of learning. The main source of feedback is expected to be comments in course reports from instructors about their experience in using the strategies. However other feedback should also be considered including comments from students or graduates, or advice from independent consultants. It is expected that the analysis in this report will be in fairly general terms, and more detailed changes would be made for each course affected in the course specifications.
a. Knowledge	Provide a summary of comments and advice received and any planned response after considering that feedback.
b. Cognitive skills	Provide a summary of comments and advice received and any planned response after considering that feedback.
c. Interpersonal skills and responsibility	Provide a summary of comments and advice received and any planned response after considering that feedback.
d. Numerical and communication skills	Provide a summary of comments and advice received and any planned response after considering that feedback.
e. Psychomotor skills	Provide a summary of comments and advice received and any planned response after considering that feedback.
3. Orientation programs for new teaching staff	Indicate whether orientation programs about the program were provided for new teaching staff and if so how many participated.
a. Brief description	Briefly describe what was done in the orientation programs
b. Summary of evaluations	Provide a brief summary of evaluations of the orientation program by the participants.
c. Reasons for not providing orientation program.	If an orientation program for new teaching staff was not provided indicate why.

4. Professional development activities for teaching and other staff.	List activities provided the number participating and provide summary comments on their value after considering feedback from participants.
G. Program Management and Administration	
1. Difficulties (if any) encountered in management of the program	List any significant difficulties encountered and for each item listed indicate the impact it might have had on achievement of program objectives (including student learning outcomes and any other program development objectives) and suggest what could be done in future to avoid those difficulties reoccurring.
H. Independent Evaluators Comments (Any notes provided by an independent evaluator or observer should be attached)	
1. Matters Raised by Independent Evaluator	List any matters raised by an independent evaluator (person familiar with the program from another institution, college or department who is familiar with programs of this type and independent of those involved with the planning and delivery of the program. Beside each matter noted in the report provide a brief comment after considering the views of faculty, students or program organizers about the view of the independent evaluator. This may agree or disagree, add additional information or interpretation or suggest an alternative response to a problem identified.
2. Implications for planning	Comment on implications for planning of the comments by the independent evaluator and the views of those who responded to those comments.
I. Action Plan	
1. Previous Years Action Plan	This item is designed to report on action taken in response to the previous year's action plan. Complete the table to note each of the actions proposed in the previous year's report and for each item note the completion date, the person responsible, whether the proposed action has been completed, and if it has not indicate the reason.
2. Proposals for Program Development	
a. Proposals for Changes to Program Structure	Note any changes proposed to the structure of the program as a result of changes in the external or internal environment or in response to evaluations received. Changes in this category might include addition or deletion of compulsory or optional courses, changes in credit hour requirements or major projects to be completed by students.
b. Proposals for Changes to Courses	Note any changes proposed to individual courses within the program such as the addition or deletion of units of study, a change in assessment procedures or teaching strategies.

	These might be brought to attention by general program evaluations or by consideration of individual course and field experience reports.
c. Teaching and Other Staff Development	Describe any faculty and/or staff development activities that are needed to improve the program as a result of the evaluations and comments received.
3. New Action Plan	List action required to improve the program indicating in each case the proposed completion date and the person responsible for carrying out that action. The action proposed in this section should include continuation of unfinished business from previous years (and in this case could be just a repeat of the previous statement with a revised completion date, action required to put the proposals for program development in item I2 into effect, or other required initiatives.

ATTACHMENT 2 (e)

Course Specification

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

**The National Commission for Academic Accreditation &
Assessment**

Course Specification

Course Specification

Institution	
College/Department	
A Course Identification and General Information	
1. Course title and code:	
2. Credit hours	
3. Program(s) in which the course is offered. (If general elective available in many programs indicate this rather than list programs)	
4. Name of faculty member responsible for the course	
5. Level/year at which this course is offered	
6. Pre-requisites for this course (if any)	
7. Co-requisites for this course (if any)	
8. Location if not on main campus	

B Objectives

1. Summary of the main learning outcomes for students enrolled in the course.
2. Briefly describe any plans for developing and improving the course that are being implemented. (e.g. increased use of IT or web based reference material, changes in content as a result of new research in the field)

C. Course Description (Note: General description in the form to be used for the Bulletin or handbook should be attached)

1 Topics to be Covered		
List of Topics	No of Weeks	Contact hours

2 Course components (total contact hours per semester):				
Lecture:	Tutorial:	Laboratory	Practical/Field work/Internship	Other:

3. Additional private study/learning hours expected for students per week. (This should be an average :for the semester not a specific requirement in each week)

<p>4. Development of Learning Outcomes in Domains of Learning</p> <p>For each of the domains of learning shown below indicate:</p> <p>A brief summary of the knowledge or skill the course is intended to develop;</p> <p>A description of the teaching strategies to be used in the course to develop that knowledge or skill;</p> <p>The methods of student assessment to be used in the course to evaluate learning outcomes in the domain concerned.</p>
a. Knowledge
(i) Description of the knowledge to be acquired
(ii) Teaching strategies to be used to develop that knowledge
(iii) Methods of assessment of knowledge acquired

b. Cognitive Skills
(i) Description of cognitive skills to be developed
(ii) Teaching strategies to be used to develop these cognitive skills
(iii) Methods of assessment of students cognitive skills
c. Interpersonal Skills and Responsibility
(i) Description of the interpersonal skills and capacity to carry responsibility to be developed
(ii) Teaching strategies to be used to develop these skills and abilities
(iii) Methods of assessment of students interpersonal skills and capacity to carry responsibility
d. Communication, Information Technology and Numerical Skills
(i) Description of the skills to be developed in this domain.
(ii) Teaching strategies to be used to develop these skills
(iii) Methods of assessment of students numerical and communication skills

e. Psychomotor Skills (if applicable)
(i) Description of the psychomotor skills to be developed and the level of performance required
(ii) Teaching strategies to be used to develop these skills
(iii) Methods of assessment of students psychomotor skills

5. Schedule of Assessment Tasks for Students During the Semester			
Assessment	Assessment task (e.g. essay, test, group project, examination etc.)	Week due	Proportion of Final Assessment
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			

D. Student Support

1. Arrangements for availability of teaching staff for individual student consultations and academic advice. (include amount of time teaching staff are expected to be available each week)

E Learning Resources

1. Required Text(s)
2. Essential References
3- Recommended Books and Reference Material (Journals, Reports, etc) (Attach List)
4-.Electronic Materials, Web Sites etc
5- Other learning material such as computer-based programs/CD, professional standards/regulations

F. Facilities Required

Indicate requirements for the course including size of classrooms and laboratories (i.e. number of seats in classrooms and laboratories, extent of computer access etc.)
1. Accommodation (Lecture rooms, laboratories, etc.)
2. Computing resources

3. Other resources (specify --e.g. If specific laboratory equipment is required, list requirements or attach list)

G Course Evaluation and Improvement Processes

1 Strategies for Obtaining Student Feedback on Effectiveness of Teaching
2 Other Strategies for Evaluation of Teaching by the Instructor or by the Department
3 Processes for Improvement of Teaching
4. Processes for Verifying Standards of Student Achievement (e.g. check marking by an independent member teaching staff of a sample of student work, periodic exchange and remarking of tests or a sample of assignments with staff at another institution)

5 Describe the planning arrangements for periodically reviewing course effectiveness and planning for improvement.

ATTACHMENT 2 (f)

Guidelines on Using the Template for a Course Specification

Descriptions of what should be included in program and course specifications and in the annual and periodic reports are included in Chapter 2 of Part 2 of this Handbook

Institution, College/Department	Show the name of the institution and the college or department principally responsible for the course.
Course Identification and General Information	
1. Course title and code	Show the title and the institutional code number for the course.
2. Credit hours	Write the number of credit hours for the course.
3. Program(s) in which the course is offered	Write the name of the program in which the course is offered. A course may be offered in more than one program and a brief explanation may be needed to show how it relates to those programs. As a guide, if a course is an important component of several programs, list these programs. If it is used as a general skills course or a service course for a number of programs this should be noted and an indication given of the fields that are supported by it. (A first year course in mathematics might be an example of this.) If the course is a general elective which could be taken in many different programs this should be noted but those programs would not be listed.
4. Name of faculty member responsible for the course	If a single member of teaching staff has been given responsibility for teaching and reporting on the delivery of a course that person's name should be given. If a team of staff teach the course and one person has been given coordinating responsibility that person's name should be shown. If it is a new course for which an instructor has not yet been appointed that should be noted and the new appointees name included when it is known.
5. Level/year at which the course is offered	Show the year level when the course is intended to be taken.
6. Pre-requisites for this course	List any courses or other requirements that are prerequisites for enrolling in the course.
7. Co-requisites for this course	List any courses or other experiences that must be taken concurrently with this course.
8. Location if not on main campus	If the course is offered in a different location such as an industry setting or in another city or township indicate where this is done.

B. Objectives	
1. Summary of main learning outcomes.	This is intended as a brief statement of the main learning outcomes of the course. Detailed learning outcomes in domains of learning are shown in the next section.
2. Course development plans	Briefly describe any plans for developments or changes in the course such as changes in use of web based material, new techniques of instruction, changes in content or increased reliance on students self study or use of library resources. The description should include the reason(s) for the changes being made.
C. Course Description	
The general course description set out in the Handbook or Bulletin should be attached.	
1. Topics to be Covered	Complete the table to indicate the amount of time and the total number of contact hours intended to be given for each topic in the course. If part of a week is allocated for a particular topic use decimals to indicate time fraction. (For example a particular topic may be planned for 2.5 or 3.5 weeks).
2. Course Components	Indicate the total contact hours intended to be given in each organizational arrangement—Lecture, tutorial, laboratory etc.
3. Additional Private Study or Learning Hours	Indicate the amount of time expected of students in private study, assignment or other work associated with the course This should be shown as an average amount of time per week over the semester.
4. Development of Learning Outcomes in Domains of Learning	In this item summarize the learning outcomes expected from the course in each of the domains of learning, the teaching strategies to be used to develop that learning and the way student learning will be assessed. Note that every course is not expected to contribute to every domain. However wherever it is feasible to do so courses should be designed to contribute to the development of skills such as effective group participation, capacity for independent learning, communication skills, and problem solving abilities. The description of teaching strategies requires more than a specification of the organizational arrangement shown under C 2 and should indicate what will be done within those arrangements to develop the kind of learning sought.
a. Knowledge	
(i) Knowledge to be	This should be a list of topics or areas of knowledge that

acquired	students should know and understand when they complete the course.
(ii) Teaching strategies	<p>Explain what strategies will be used to develop students' knowledge and understanding.</p> <p>Example—Lectures, tutorials and independent study assignments. Introductory lecture gives an overview of the content and significance of the course and of its relationship to students' existing knowledge. Each subsequent lecture begins with a similar overview linking the particular content of the presentation to the general overview. Tutorials review the content of each lecture and clarify any matters not understood. Individual assignments require use of library reference material and web sites to identify information required to complete tasks.</p>
(iii) Methods of assessment	<p>Explain how acquisition of knowledge will be assessed.</p> <p>Example--15 minute multiple choice tests on content on completion of each topic with results carrying 20% of final assessment. Multiple choice knowledge items on final exam.</p>
(b) Cognitive Skills	
(i) Cognitive skills to be developed	<p>List the thinking and problem solving skills the course is intended to develop. As a guide it may be useful to begin with the phrase "The ability to..." The list should include both the use of analytic and predictive formulae and conceptual tools when asked to do so, and the ability to identify and use ones that are appropriate for new and unanticipated problems.</p>
(ii) Teaching strategies	<p>Explain techniques to be used to teach and encourage appropriate use of cognitive skills.</p> <p>Example—Explanations and examples given in lectures and practiced under supervision in tutorials and laboratory tasks. Transfer of learning encouraged by use of analytical tools in different applications and through discussion of potential application in other areas. Assignment tasks include some open ended tasks designed to apply predictive, analytical and problem solving skills (e.g. What would happen if..... How could.....?)</p>
(iii) Methods of assessment	<p>Explain method of assessment for cognitive skills.</p> <p>Example—Problem solving questions carrying 50% of mark on tests given at the end of each topic and on end of semester examination. Group and individual assignments require application of analytical tools in problem solving tasks.</p>
(c) Interpersonal Skills and Responsibility	

(i) Skills to be developed	List the objectives of this course for improving students' interpersonal skills, capacity for self directed learning, and personal and social responsibility.
(ii) Teaching strategies	<p>Explain what will be done in the course to develop students' interpersonal skills, personal and social responsibility, and capacity for independent learning.</p> <p>Example—One group assignment in which 25% of assessment is based on individuals contribution to the group task. (Instructor meets with each group part way through project to discuss and advise on approach to the task) Two individual assignments requiring investigation using internet and library resources as a means of developing self study skills. Role play exercise on controversial issue relevant to the course based on a case study, with discussion in tutorial of appropriate responses and consequences to individuals involved.</p>
(iii) Methods of assessment	<p>Explain how interpersonal skills and responsibility will be assessed.</p> <p>Example—Assessment of group assignment includes component for individual contribution. Capacity for independent study assessed in individual assignments.</p>
(d) Communication Information Technology and Numerical Skills	
(i) Skills to be developed	<p>Indicate the contribution of this course to students' communication, IT and numerical skills. Note that what is intended in this section is the development of generic skills for all students rather than specialized studies relevant to a field of study that would be included under items a. or b.</p> <p>For example a course in history or philosophy might include some use of basic mathematical or statistical information and the use of ICT in searching for information and presenting reports. A course in computer science might include the ability to present written reports that develop language ability.</p>
(ii) Teaching strategies	<p>Explain what will be done in the course to develop students' numerical and communication skills.</p> <p>Example—Student assignments require good standards of use of ICT. Where standards are inadequate the student is referred for special remedial instruction. Student essay assignments require proper style and referencing format as specified in college style manual.</p>
(iii) Methods of assessment	<p>Explain how numerical and communication skills will be assessed in this course. Example—Test questions require interpretation of simple statistical information.</p>

	Assessments of students assignment and project work include expectation of adequate use of numerical and communication skills. Five percent of marks allocated for standard of presentation using ICT.
(e) Psychomotor Skills	
(i) Skills to be developed	Indicate any psychomotor skills the course is intended to develop and describe the standard to be achieved.
(ii) Teaching strategies	Explain processes to be used to develop required psychomotor skills as specified in course learning outcomes.
(iii) Methods of assessment	Explain how psychomotor skills will be assessed.

6. Schedule of Assessment Tasks	Complete the table to show the dates planned for each assessment task and the proportion of the final assessment allocated for that task.
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D. Student Support	
1. Availability of teaching staff for consultations and advice.	Describe the arrangements to be made for individual student counseling and advice. This should include the time allocation and schedule for teaching staff to meet with students.

E Learning Resources	
1. Required Texts	List any required texts.
Essential References	List reference material regarded as essential for teaching the course.
3. Recommended Books and Reference Material	Attach list of material that should be available for reference by students undertaking the course.
4. Electronic Materials	List requirements for access to electronic materials, data bases etc.
5. Other Materials	List any other learning materials that are required for the course

F. Facilities Required	
1. Accommodation	Specify accommodation requirements for delivery of the course indicating the type of facility (e.g. lecture rooms, laboratories etc. the amount of time needed, any special requirements for scheduling, and the number of students to be accommodated.
2. Computing resources	Specify requirements for computer access.
3. Other Resources	Specify any other requirements for the course including

	specialized equipment. Attach list if necessary.
--	--

G. Course Evaluation and Improvement Processes	
1. Strategies for Obtaining Student Feedback on Quality of Teaching	Describe strategies. e.g. confidential completion of standard course evaluation questionnaire. Focus group discussion with small groups of students.
2. Other Strategies for Evaluation of Teaching	Describe any other strategies for evaluation of teaching. e.g. observations and assistance from colleagues, independent assessment of standards achieved by students, independent advice on assignment tasks, etc.
3. Processes for Improvement of Teaching	Describe processes for improvement of teaching. e.g. Workshops on teaching methods, review of recommended teaching strategies.
4. Processes for Verifying Standards of Student Achievement	Describe methods used to compare standards of achievement with standards achieved elsewhere. e.g. check marking of a sample of examination papers or assignment tasks,
5. Action Planning for Improvement	Describe process for reviewing feedback on the quality of the course and planning for improvement

ATTACHMENT 2 (g)

Course Report

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

**The National Commission for Academic Accreditation &
Assessment**

COURSE REPORT

To be completed by course instructors at the end of each course and given to program coordinator.

If the course is taught in more than one location the course report should be prepared for each location by the course instructors responsible for the course in each location. A combined report should be prepared by the course coordinator and the separate location reports attached.

Course Report

For guidance on the completion of this template, refer to Section 2.5 of Chapter 2 in Part 2 in this Handbook

Institution
College/ Department

A Course Identification and General Information

1. Course title and code.
2. If course is taught in more than one section indicate the section to which this report applies
3. Year and semester to which this report applies.
4 Location (if not on main campus)

B- Course Delivery

1 Coverage of Planned Program			
Topics	Planned Contact Hours	Actual Contact Hours	Reason for Variations if there is a difference of more than 25% of the hours planned

<p>2. Consequences of Non Coverage of Topics</p> <p>For any topics where significantly less time was spent than was intended in the course specification, or where the topic was not taught at all, comment on how significant you believe the lack of coverage is for the program objectives or for later courses in the program, and suggest possible compensating action if you believe it is needed.</p>
--

Topics (if any) not Fully Covered	Significance of Lack of Coverage	Possible Compensating Action Elsewhere in the Program

3. Effectiveness of Planned Teaching Strategies for Intended Learning Outcomes set out in the Course Specification. (Refer to planned teaching strategies in Course Specification and description of Domains of Learning Outcomes in the National Qualifications Framework)

Domains	List Teaching Strategies set out in Course Specification	Were these Effective?		Difficulties Experienced (if any) in Using the Strategy and Suggested Action to Deal with Those Difficulties.
		No	Yes	
a. Knowledge				
b. Cognitive Skills				
c. Interpersonal Skills and Responsibility				
d. Numerical and Communication Skills				
e Psychomotor Skills (if applicable)				

4. Summarize any actions you recommend for improving teaching strategies as a result of evaluations in table 3 above.

C. Results

1 Number of students starting the course:

Number of students completing the course:

3 Distribution of Grades (If percentage marks are given indicate numbers in each 5 percentile group)

	No		%	No	%	No
A		OR	95-100		70-74	
B			90-94		65-69	
C			85-89		60-64	
D			80-84		< 60	
F			75-79			
Denied Entry			Denied Entry			
In Progress			In Progress			
Incomplete			Incomplete			
Pass			Pass			
Fail			Fail			
Withdrawn			Withdrawn			

4 Result Summary:

Passed: No Percent Failed No
Percent

Did not complete Percent	No	<input type="text"/>	Percent	<input type="text"/>	Denied Entry	No	<input type="text"/>
5 Special factors (if any) affecting the results							

6. Variations from planned student assessment processes (if any) (See items C 4 and 5 in the Course Specification.)	
Variations (if any) from planned assessment schedule (C5 in Course Specification)	
Variation	Reason
b. Variations (if any) from planned assessment processes in Domains of Learning (C4 in Course Specification)	
Variation	Reason

7 Verification of Standards of Achievement (e.g. check marking of a sample of papers by others in the department. See G4 in Course Specification) (Where an independent report is provided, a copy should be attached.)	
Method(s) of Verification	Conclusion

D Resources and Facilities

1. Difficulties in access to resources or facilities (if any)	2. Consequences of any difficulties experienced for student learning in the course.
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E. Administrative Issues

1 Organizational or administrative difficulties encountered (if any)	2. Consequences of any difficulties experienced for student learning in the course.
--	---

F Course Evaluation

1 Student evaluation of the course: (Attach Survey Results if available)	
a List the most important criticisms and strengths	
b Response of instructor or course team to this evaluation	
2. Other Evaluation -- What evaluations were received? Specify and attach reports where available. (e.g. By head of department, peer observations, accreditation review, other stakeholders etc):	
a List the most important criticisms and strengths	

--

b Response of instructor or course team to this evaluation
--

G Planning for Improvement

1. Progress on actions proposed for improving the course in previous course reports:	
Actions proposed in the most recent previous course report(s)	State whether each action was undertaken, the impact, and if the proposed action was not undertaken or completed, give reasons.

2. Other action taken to improve the course this semester/year Provide a brief summary of any other action taken to improve the course and the results achieved. (For example, professional development for faculty, modifications to the course, new equipment, new teaching techniques etc.)

3. Action Plan for Next Semester/Year

Actions Required	Completion Date	Person Responsible
4. Recommendations to Program Coordinator (if Required)		
(Recommendations by the instructor to the program coordinator if any proposed action to improve the course would require approval at program, department or institutional level or that might affect other courses in the program.).		

Name of Course Instructor: _____ -

Signature: _____ Date Report Completed: _____

Received by Program Coordinator Date: _____

ATTACHMENT 2 (h)

Guidelines on Using the Template for a Course Report

Institution, College/Department	Show the name of the institution and the college or department principally responsible for the course.
A. Course Identification and General Information	
1. Course title and code	Show the title and institutional code number for the course.
2. Section of the course	If the course is taught in several different section indicate the section to which this report applies, either by a section number or by indicating the name of the faculty member concerned.
3. Year and semester to which this report applies	Indicate the calendar year and semester.
5. Location if not on the main campus	If the course was offered in a different location such as an industry setting or in another city or township indicate where this is done. If the course was offered both on the main campus and elsewhere complete two course reports. In that case the separate offering on the different campus should be clearly identified under this item and under item 2.
B. Course Delivery	
1. Coverage of planned program	Complete the table to compare the planned coverage of topics in the planned program with what actually happened. If there was a large variation (25% or more variation from the plan) give a brief explanation.
2. Consequences of non coverage of topics	This item is intended to draw attention to consequences for the program when topics could not be given the time that was planned. For any topics that were not given the time planned comment on whether you believe this is a significant problem for the program and suggest possible compensating action. For example it might be possible to provide special seminars or include extra topics in a later course.
3. Effectiveness of planned teaching strategies for intended learning outcomes.	Comment under each of the domains on the recommended teaching strategies indicating whether you believe they were effective for their purpose, noting any difficulties experienced and suggesting responses if changes are needed. For example it might be desirable to provide different support material or prepare students in a different way, for the instructors to gain more practice in the use of a strategy,

	or for a different strategy to be used for that learning outcome.
4. Recommended changes or processes for improvement	If the description under 3 indicates action is required what would you recommend?
C. Results	
1. Number of students starting	Indicate the number of students who enrolled and actually started attending classes at the beginning of the semester.
2. Number completing	This should be the number who attended classes until the end of the semester regardless of whether they passed or failed.
3. Distribution of grades	Show the distribution of grades or percentage marks using the system normally applied in the institution.
4. Results summary	Show the numbers and percentages of students who passed, failed etc.
5. Special factors	Include a brief explanation if there were any unusual events or circumstances that might have affected the grade distribution.
6. Variations from planned assessment processes. a. Variations from the planned schedule b. Variations from the assessment strategies for different domains of learning	If there were any variations from the schedule of assessment tasks and or assignment activities indicate the change that was made and the reasons for it. If there were variations from the strategies planned for assessing students learning in different domains of learning as set out in the course specification indicate the changes that were made and the reasons for them.
7. Verification of standards of achievement	Explain what was done to check that the standards applied in assessments of students work were valid and appropriate.

D. Resources and Facilities	
1. Difficulties in access to resources or facilities	If there were any difficulties in getting access to the resources or facilities required for the course give a brief description.
2. Consequences of difficulties	For any difficulties that were experienced explain any effect they may have had on student learning.

E. Administrative Issues	
1. Organizational or administrative difficulties	If there were any organizational or administrative difficulties that affected the course give a brief description.
2. Effect of	Explain what effect difficulties experienced may have had

difficulties on student learning	on students learning in the course.
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F. Course Evaluation	
1. Student evaluation of the course	Attach survey results
a. List the most important criticisms and strengths	List the most common and the most significant criticisms and strengths as shown in the student evaluations
b. Response of instructor or course team	Provide a brief explanation or comment. These may acknowledge or disagree with strengths or areas in need of improvement or provide an explanation or interpretation.
2. Other Evaluation	Describe any other evaluations received from different sources, for example comment by colleagues or head of department, or visiting reviewers.
a. List the most important criticisms or strengths.	List the most common and the most significant criticisms and strengths as revealed in these other evaluations.
b. Response of instructor or course team	Provide a brief comment. These may agree or disagree with strengths or areas in need of improvement or provide an explanation.
G. Planning for Improvement	
1. Action taken to improve the course this semester/year	Provide a summary description of any actions that were taken as a result of previous course evaluations or action plans described in course reports to improve the course and comment on the results achieved.
2. Progress on other actions proposed.	List other action that was taken to improve the course and comment on results achieved.
3. Action Plan for Next Semester/Year	List action proposed to improve the course for the next semester/year noting for each action the planned completion date and the person responsible.
4. Recommendations for Program Coordinator	List recommendations for consideration by the department chair or program coordinator that would require decision at that level or that might affect other courses in the program.

ATTACHMENT 2 (i)

Field Experience Specification

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

**The National Commission for Academic Accreditation &
Assessment**

Field Experience Specification

Field Experience Specification

For guidance on the completion of this template, refer to Section 2.6 in Chapter 2 of Part 2 of this Handbook.

Institution
College/Department

A Field Experience Course Identification and General Information

Field experience course title and code
Credit hours
3. Program in which this field experience activity is offered
4. Name of faculty member responsible for administration of the field experience
5. Duration and time allocation of the field experience activity
6. Level/year at which the field experience is offered

B Objectives

<p>1. Summary of the main learning outcomes for students participating in the field experience activity.</p>
<p>2. Briefly describe any plans for developing and improving the field experience activity that are being implemented.</p>
<p>3. Learning Outcomes in Domains of Learning</p> <p>For the domains of learning shown below indicate: A brief summary of the knowledge or skill the field experience is intended to develop; A description of the teaching strategies to be used in the course to develop that knowledge or skill. The methods of student assessment to be used in the course to evaluate learning outcomes in the domain concerned.</p> <p>(Note that the objectives of the field experience may not include all of the domains and the items should be completed only for kinds of learning the field experience activity is intended to develop)</p>
<p>a. Knowledge</p>
<p>(i) Description of the knowledge to be acquired</p>
<p>(ii) What will be done to develop that knowledge</p>

(iii) Methods of assessment of knowledge acquired
b. Cognitive Skills
(i) Description of cognitive skills to be developed
(ii) What will be done to develop these cognitive skills
(iii) Methods of assessment of skills developed
c. Interpersonal Skills and Responsibility
(i) Description of the interpersonal skills and capacity to carry responsibility to be developed
(ii) What will be done to develop these skills and abilities

(iii) Methods of assessment of skills and abilities developed
d. Communication, Information Technology and Numerical Skills
(i) Description of the numerical and communication skills to be developed
(ii) What will be done to develop these skills
(iii) Methods of assessment of skills developed
e. Psychomotor Skills (if applicable)
(i) Description of the psychomotor skills to be developed and the level of performance required
(ii) What will be done to develop these skills

(iii) Methods of assessment of psychomotor skills

C Description of Field Experience Activity (General description in the form to be used for the Bulletin or Handbook should be attached)

1. At what stage or stages during the program does the field experience occur?	
2. Organizational structure (e.g. single time block, distributed time blocks, recurrent schedule of XXX days per week)	
3. Student Activities Describe the principal activities in which the students will be involved during the field experience.	
4. Student assignments or reports (if any)	
a. Title or description	b. When are these assignments or reports required?

<p>5. Follow up with Students. What arrangements are made for follow up with students to reflect on their experiences and apply what they have learned to future situations? (e.g. Seminars or tutorials, individual consultations, reference in subsequent courses, etc.)</p>	
<p>6. Responsibilities of Supervisory Staff in the Field. Describe the main responsibilities of supervising staff working in the field location. (e.g. Planning activities for student's development of skills, advice to students, assessment of performance)</p>	
<p>7. Responsibilities of Supervisory Faculty from the Institution. Describe the main responsibilities of supervising faculty from the institution. (e.g. Consultation, planning with and advice to field supervisors and students, student assessment, time expectations for visits, etc)</p>	
<p>8. Arrangements for student guidance and support</p>	

9. What facilities and support are required at the field experience location? (if any)
a. Accommodation
b Computer resources
c Learning support materials
d Other

D Planning and Preparation

1. Identification of Field Placements. What processes are used to identify appropriate field placements?
2. Preparation of Field Supervisors. Briefly describe and indicate timing of arrangements made to ensure full understanding of roles and responsibilities of supervising faculty/staff in the field setting. (e.g., briefing meetings and follow up consultation, training, staff development, notes for guidance.)
3. Preparation of Students. Briefly describe and indicate timing of arrangements made for preparation of students for participation in the field experience activity. (Cross reference to any written notes provided)
4. Safety and Risk Management Describe process used to ensure safety and identify potential risks to students, persons with whom they work, or facilities where they will be

located, and strategies to minimize and protect against those risks (including insurance arrangements).

E Student Assessment

1. Basis for Assessments. List the major performance criteria or matters considered in deciding on student grades. These may include assessments of work performance and personal characteristics and written reports of assignments. If specified weightings are given for different tasks or criteria indicate the weighting given to each component

2. Field Supervisors Responsibility for Assessment. Describe the responsibility of supervising staff in the field location for student assessment

3. Supervising Faculty Responsibility for Assessment. Describe the responsibility of supervising faculty from the institution for student assessment

4 Resolution of Differences in Assessments. If supervising staff in the field location and faculty from the institution share responsibility for student assessment, what process is followed for resolving any differences between them?

F Evaluation of the Field Experience

1. Arrangements for evaluation of field experience activity by:

a. Students

b. Supervising staff in the field setting

c. Supervising faculty from the institution

e. Others—(e.g. graduates, independent evaluator, etc.)

2. Describe the planning arrangements for periodically reviewing the effectiveness of the field experience and planning for improvement.

ATTACHMENT 2 (j)

Guidelines on Using the Template for a Field Experience Specification

Institution, College/Department	Show the name of the institution and the college or department principally responsible for the field experience activity
A. Field Experience Course Identification and General Information	
1. Field experience course title and code	Show the title and the institutional code number for the field experience
2. Credit hours	Write the number of credit hours for the field experience activity.
3. Program in which this field experience is offered.	Write the name of the program
4. Name of faculty member responsible for the administration of the field experience	If a single faculty member has been given responsibility for coordinating the field experience activity that person's name should be given. If it is a new program for which a coordinator has not yet been appointed that should be noted and the new appointees name included when it is known.
5. Duration and time allocation of the field experience activity	Indicate the length of time taken in the field experience activity and the amount of time taken. e.g. One semester one day per week, three weeks full time, etc.
6. Level/year at which the field experience is offered	Indicate the year level in the program when the field experience is undertaken.

B. Objectives	
1. Main learning outcomes of the Field Experience	This should be a brief summary of the main purposes only. A more detailed description of intended learning outcomes is requested in 3. below.
2. Plans for developing or improving the field experience activity.	List and briefly describe any plans for major changes or developments of the field experience activity and strategies that are being used to achieve those objectives. For example a pilot program to assess the effect of varying scheduling arrangements for the field experience, introduction of newsletters about the program to field supervisors to improve communication and understanding, field research activities by groups of faculty working in cooperation with field supervisors..

3 Learning Outcomes	In this item summarize the learning outcomes expected from
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in Domains of Learning	the field experience in each of the domains of learning, what will be done to develop that learning and the way student learning will be assessed. The field experience is not expected to contribute to every domain but where important outcomes are expected they should be clearly identified and attention given to how they will be developed and learning assessed.
(a). Knowledge	
(i) Knowledge to be acquired	This should be a description of the knowledge that students should gain as a result of participation in the field experience.
(ii) Teaching strategies	Explain what will be done to ensure that this knowledge is gained. Example—Field supervisors advised of regulations, procedures, safety precautions students should learn about and asked to ensure that information is provided. Students complete assignment recording information obtained. Tutorial discussion following completion of field experience to review what students have learned
(iii) Methods of assessment	Describe how learning will be assessed. For example— Student quiz at end of field experience.
(b) Cognitive Skills	
(i) Cognitive skills to be developed	List the thinking and problem solving skills the field experience is intended to develop. As a guide it may be useful to begin with the phrase “The ability to....” The list should include practical skills that involve the use of analysis and problem solving techniques gained in on campus studies and any additional techniques used by practitioners in the field setting.
(ii) Teaching strategies	Describe what will be done to ensure that these skills are developed. Example—Practical tasks carried out in the field setting, Assignment task to be completed with advice of field supervisor.
(iii) Methods of assessment	Describe how cognitive skills will be assessed. Example— Ratings of performance by field supervisor and faculty member. Faculty assessment of assignment task.
(c) Interpersonal Skills and Responsibility	
(i) Skills to be developed	List the objectives of the field experience for improving students’ interpersonal skills, capacity for self directed learning, and personal and social responsibility.
(ii) Teaching strategies	Explain what will be done to improve these abilities. Examples—Advice on procedures by field supervisor followed by involvement in group planning task,

	independent investigation of an identified issue or problem in the field setting involving discussions with relevant people and other investigations.
(iii) Methods of assessment	Ratings by field supervisor and faculty member on performance in group and research tasks.
(d) Communication, IT and Numerical Skills	
(i) Skills to be developed	Indicate the contribution of this course to students' numerical and communication skills.
(ii) Teaching strategies	Indicate what will be done to apply and improve these skills. Example--Use of skills in practical tasks in the field setting with advice as required by field supervisor
(iii) Methods of assessment	Indicate how quality of learning will be assessed. Example--Judgments about effectiveness of analyses and communications incorporated into ratings of performance in the field setting.
(e) Psychomotor Skills	
(i) Skills to be developed	Indicate any psychomotor skills the field experience activity is intended to develop.
(ii) Teaching strategies	Explain how these skills will be improved in the field experience setting.
(iii) Methods of assessment	Explain what will be done to assess quality of performance.

C. Description of Field Experience Activity	
1. At what stage(s) does the field experience occur?	Indicate when during the program the students participate in the field experience.
2. Organizational structure	Describe how the time schedule for the field experience is organized. e.g. One day per week for XXX weeks, three weeks full time, one semester full time, etc.
3. Student Activities	Describe the principal activities in which the students will be involved during the field experience. If their level of responsibility is to be progressively increased during the period, explain how that will be done.
4. Student Assignments or Reports	List any assignments or reports that students are required to prepare and indicate the time when they must be completed.
5. Follow up Activities with Students.	Describe follow up activities with students after completion of the field experience to consolidate and apply learning, reflect on the experience etc.
6. Responsibilities of supervising staff in the	Describe the major responsibilities to be carried by the supervising staff.

field setting	
7. Responsibilities of supervising faculty from the institution	Describe the responsibilities of supervising faculty from the institution.
8. Arrangements made for student guidance and support	Describe arrangements made for student support and guidance including scheduled contacts and emergency access for advice and assistance.
9. Facilities and support required at the field experience location	Describe what facilities are required including desk or other accommodation at the field site, computer access if necessary, learning support materials and any other requirements.

D. Planning and Preparation	
1. Identification of Field Placements	Describe the process followed in identifying placements including principal criteria for selection.
2. Preparation of Field Supervisors	Describe the process followed to brief supervising staff in the field setting on their responsibilities and the processes to be followed with students. Include details of when this will be done and mechanisms for ongoing consultation and emergency contact if required.
3. Preparation of Student	Describe what will be done to prepare students for their participation in the work experience program and the timing of this preparation. Written notes prepared for student guidance should be referred to or attached.
4. Safety and Risk Management	Describe process followed to ensure safety and identify risks for students, clients or others associated with the field experience activity and steps taken to minimize and protect against those risks. If a risk assessment has been prepared a copy should be attached.

E. Student Assessment	
1. Basis for Assessment	Describe the principal criteria for the assessment of student's performance in the field setting.
2. Field Supervisors Responsibility for Assessment	Describe the responsibility of field supervisors for student assessment. . (e.g. assessment of some aspects of work done, overall assessment of performance shared with supervising faculty from institution, etc.)
3. Supervising Faculty Responsibility for Assessment	Describe the responsibility of supervising faculty from the institution for student assessment. . (e.g., assessment of some aspects of work done, overall assessment shared with supervising staff in the field location, etc.)
4. Resolution of Differences in	Explain what process is followed if the field supervisor and the supervising faculty member from the institution differ in

Assessments	their assessment of students performance in the field experience.
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F. Evaluation of Field Experience	
1. Evaluation of Field Experience by	
a. Students	Describe process for obtaining feedback on the quality of the field experience by the students involved.
b. Supervising staff in the field setting	Describe process for obtaining feedback on the quality of the field experience by the supervising staff in the field setting.
c. Supervising faculty from the institution.	Describe process for obtaining feedback on the quality of the field experience by the supervising faculty from the institution.
d. Others	Describe process for obtaining feedback on the quality of the field experience by other stakeholders. (e.g.. former students in surveys of the quality of the program as a whole.).
2. Arrangements for reviewing evaluations and planning for improvements	Describe the process to be followed in reviewing feedback from various sources and planning for improvement. Example—Summary of evaluations prepared and considered by a program planning group including representatives of students and supervisors at the end of each year.

ATTACHMENT 2 (k)

Field Experience Report

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

**The National Commission for Academic Accreditation &
Assessment**

Field Experience REPORT

To be completed by the field experience coordinator at the end of each field experience after receiving evaluation information and given to program coordinator.

Field Experience Report

Field Experience encompasses fieldwork, professional or clinical placements, internships and other forms of placement learning and applied learning that are part of the formal curriculum within the educational program. For guidance on the completion of this template, refer to 2.4.3 of Handbook 2, Internal Quality Assurance Processes

Institution
College/Department

A . General Information

1 Field experience course title and code
2 Program(s) in which this field experience activity is offered
3 Name of faculty member responsible for administration of field experience
4 Year/ semester to which this report applies

B. Conduct of Field Experience

1 Changes (if any) from planned arrangements for preparation of students.	Comment (reasons, consequences, implications for future planning)
2 Changes (if any) from planned arrangements for preparation of field supervisors.	Comment (reasons, consequences, implications for future planning)
3 Changes (if any) in organizational arrangements for the field experience	Comment (reasons, consequences, implications for future planning)
a. Changes in required activity, tasks or assignments	
b. Changes in arrangements for student support	
c. Other changes (if any)	

C. Results

1 Number of students starting the field experience:	<input type="text"/>
2 Number of students completing the field experience:	<input type="text"/>

3 Distribution of Grades (If percentage marks are given indicate numbers in each 5 percentile group)

	No	OR	%	No	%	No
A			95-100		70-47	
B			90-94		65-69	
C			85-89		60-64	
D			80-84		< 60	
F			75-79			
Denied Entry			Denied Entry			
In Progress			In Progress			
Incomplete			Incomplete			
Pass			Pass			
Fail			Fail			
Withdrawn			Withdrawn			

4 Result Summary:

Passed: No Percent Failed No Percent
 Did not complete No Percent

5 Special factors (if any) affecting the results

D Administrative Issues

1 Administrative difficulties encountered either at the institution or in the field situations (if any).

2. Effect of any difficulties on student learning outcomes.

3. Changes needed to avoid these difficulties in future administration of the field experience. (if any)

E Evaluation of Field Experience Activity

1. Student Evaluation of the field experience: (attach survey results)
a. List the most important criticisms and strengths
b. Response of coordinator or field experience team
2 Comments (interviews, survey results etc) from field experience supervisors:
a. List the most important criticisms and strengths.
b. Response of coordinator or field experience team.

F Planning for Improvement

1. Action taken to improve the field experience this semester/year.
Provide a brief summary of significant developments this year, including professional development for faculty or support for field supervisors, modifications to the field experience, and new approaches to quality management.

2 Progress on other action identified in previous action plans:

a. Items identified last year for action (other than those shown in item 1 above) State whether completed, the impact, and if not completed, give reasons.

3. Action Plan for Next Semester/Year

Actions Required	Planned Completion Date	Person Responsible

4. Recommendations to Program Coordinator (if required)

Recommendations to program coordinator if any proposed action to improve the field experience would require approval at program, department or institutional level or that might affect other courses in the program.

Field Experience coordinator

Signature: _____ Date report completed: _____

Date received by Program Coordinator: _____

ATTACHMENT 2 (I)
Guidelines on Using the Template for a Field Experience Report

Institution, College/Department	Show the name of the institution and the college or department principally responsible for the course.
A. General Information	
1. Field experience course title and code	Show the title and institutional code number for the course.
2. Program(s) in which this field experience activity is offered	Write the name of the program.
3. Name of faculty member responsible for administration of field experience	Indicate name of coordinator. If report is prepared by a different person also show the name of that person.
4. Year and semester to which this report applies	Indicate the calendar year and semester.

B. Conduct of the Field Experience	
1. Changes (if any) from planned arrangements for preparation of students.	Describe any variations that occurred from what was planned. Comments should include reasons for the changes and the likely effects of those variations. Implications for future planning could include suggestions for avoiding problems that caused changes that were not wanted, or changes in plans if new ideas tried were successful.
2. Changes (if any) from planned arrangements for preparation of field supervisors.	Describe any variations that occurred from what was planned. Comments should include reasons for the changes and the likely effects of those variations. Implications for future planning could include suggestions for avoiding problems that caused changes that were not wanted, or changes in plans if new ideas tried were successful.
3. Changes (if any) in organizational arrangements for the field experience.	Changes referred to under items a. b. or c. below could include either changes that were planned and implemented, or changes that resulted from unanticipated events that prevented plans being followed or created new unexpected opportunities.
a. Changes in required activities, tasks or assignments	Describe change and note reason for it being made, indicate consequences of the change (if any) and comment on implications for the future. Implications for future planning could include suggestions for avoiding problems that caused changes that were

	not wanted, or changes in plans if new ideas tried were successful.
Changes in arrangements for student support.	Describe change and note reason for it being made, indicate consequences of the change (if any) and comment on implications for the future. Implications for future planning could include suggestions for avoiding problems that caused changes that were not wanted, or changes in plans if new ideas tried were successful.
c. Other changes	Describe change and note reason for it being made, indicate consequences of the change (if any) and comment on implications for the future. Implications for future planning could include suggestions for avoiding problems that caused unwanted changes, or changes in plans if new ideas tried were successful.
C. Results	
1. Number of students commencing the field experience	Show the number of students commencing the field experience activity.
2. Number of students completing the field experience	Show the number of students who completed the course, including any who completed and failed.
3. Distribution of Grades	Enter numbers in the table to show the distribution of grades or percentage marks. (Follow the grading system used by your institution)
4. Result Summary	Show the numbers and percentages of those who commenced the field experience activity who passed, failed or did not complete.
5. Special factors. (if any) affecting the grade distribution.	Describe any unusual events or special factors that might have affected the numbers or percentages noted above and explain what affect those events or factors might have had.
E. Administrative Issues	
1. Administrative difficulties encountered (if any)	Briefly describe any administrative difficulties that were encountered
2. Effect of any difficulties on student learning outcomes.	Comment on any likely effects on student learning in the field experience as a result of those difficulties.
3. Changes needed to avoid those difficulties in future administration of the field experience	Provide suggestions for future planning that might avoid similar problems emerging in the future.
F. Evaluation of Field Experience Activity	
1. Student evaluation of the field experience.	Attach most recent survey results
a. List the most important criticisms and	List the most common and the most significant criticisms and strengths as shown in the student evaluations

strengths	
b. Response of coordinator or field experience team	Provide explanation or comment. This may acknowledge or disagree with strengths or areas in need of improvement or provide an explanation or interpretation.
2. Comments from field experience supervisors	
a. List the most important criticisms and strengths	Describe how comments were obtained from supervising staff in the field situation.. List the most common and the most significant criticisms and strengths.
b. Response of instructor or field experience team	Provide explanation or comment including comments from supervising faculty from the institution. These may acknowledge or disagree with strengths or areas in need of improvement or provide an explanation or interpretation.
G. Planning for Improvement	
1. Action taken to improve the field experience activity this semester/year	Provide a summary description of any actions that were implemented to improve the activity in the current semester/year and comment on the results achieved.
2. Progress on other actions proposed.	List other actions to improve the field experience that were proposed in previous years and that have still to be fully implemented. For each one indicate progress made and if not undertaken or completed as planned, give reasons.
3. Action Plan for Next Semester/Year	List action proposed to improve the field experience for the next semester/year noting for each action the planned completion date and the person responsible.
4. Recommendations for Program Coordinator	List recommendations for consideration by the department or program coordinator that would require decision at that level or that might affect other courses in the program.

ATTACHMENT 2 (m)

Report on Periodic Program Self-Study

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

**The National Commission for Academic Accreditation &
Assessment**

Report on Periodic Program Self Study

Introductory Comments

A periodic program self study is a thorough examination of the quality of a program taking account of

The mission and objectives of the program and the extent to which they are being achieved;

For a professional program, requirements for the practice of that profession in Saudi Arabia,

The standards for quality assurance and accreditation defined by the NCAAA including the *National Qualifications Framework*

Conclusions should be supported by evidence, with verification of analysis and conclusions, and advice from others able to offer informed and independent comment.

A self study report should be considered as a research report on the quality of the program. It should include sufficient information to inform a reader who is unfamiliar with the institution about the process of investigation and the evidence on which conclusions are based to have reasonable confidence that those conclusions are sound.

Other documents such as university handbooks should be available separately and completed scales from the Self Evaluation Scales for Higher Education Programs should be completed and made available with the self study report. Consequently full details of what is included in these documents need not be repeated in the self study report. However this report should include all the necessary information for it to be read as a complete self contained report on the quality of the program.

The template includes a number of sections and headings to assist in preparing the report. These sections and headings should be followed in the report. However additional information can be included. Throughout the report evidence should be presented in tables or other forms of data presentation to support conclusions, with comparative data included where appropriate, and reference made to other reports or surveys with more detailed information.

The report should be provided as a page numbered document, single sided, with a table of contents. A list of acronyms used in the report should be attached.

A key to writing a successful self-study report is to ensure that processes are fully and clearly described so it can be fully understood by independent external reviewers and that conclusions about quality are supported wherever possible by evidence. An effective self-study report includes numerous references to statistical data and results of stakeholder surveys, and to thorough analysis of this information. Achievement of high quality standards needs to be demonstrated by appropriate comparisons with other good quality institutions selected as benchmarks for this purpose and for planning for improvement. Key performance indicators should be referred to throughout, including

both those identified by the NCAAA and others selected by the institution itself for monitoring its performance and planning for improvement.

Template for Report on Periodic Program Self-Study for an Undergraduate Program
 For guidance on the completion of this template, please refer to Sections 2.8, 2.9, and 2.10 of Part 2 of the Handbook for Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Saudi Arabia and to the Guidelines for Using the Template for a Periodic Program Self-Study.

Institution
Title of College and Department in which the program is offered
Title of Program
Date of Report
Name and Contact details for Head of Department
Name of Person Responsible for Preparation of Report Name and contact details for person to contact for further information about matters discussed in the report and for arrangements for an external review visit. (if different from above)

A. General Program Profile Information

1. Program title and code
2. Credit hours required for completion of the program
3. Award (s) granted on completion of the program
4. Major tracks or pathways within the program
5. Professional occupations for which graduates are prepared in the program
6. Name of program coordinator or manager. If a program coordinator or manager has been appointed for a female section as well as a male section, include names of both.

7. Location of program if not on main campus If offered on several campuses or by distance education as well as on-campus include details.
8. Date of approval of program specification within the institution
9. If a private institution, date of final approval by the MHE to offer the program
10. Date of most recent previous self-study (if any)
Note that a number of other documents giving general information about the program should be provided in addition to the periodic program report. See list at the end of this template.

B Program Profile Data

Historical Summary

Provide a brief historical summary of the program including such things as when and why it was introduced, student numbers over time, and relationships with industry or professional advisory groups, graduate employment outcomes and major program changes. Include brief comments about what are believed to be the programs main strengths and accomplishments and about any significant problems or concerns that are being addressed.

Preparatory or Foundation Program

If a preparatory or foundation year program is provided prior to entry to this program, are all students required to take that program?

Yes No

If some students are required to complete a preparatory or foundation program what criteria are used to decide who should do so?

If some students undertake a preparatory or foundation program and some do not, show percentage of those who successfully complete first year of the program for both groups. (Show also the percentage of those who successfully completed first year in the last year before the foundation or preparatory program was introduced.)

	Percent successfully completing first year
Students completing prep or foundation program	
Students not completing prep or foundation	

program	
Students admitted prior to introduction of prep or foundation program	

Statistical Summary

Student Enrolments (Not including preparatory or foundation programs)

Students	On Campus Programs			Distance Education Programs		
	Full time	Part time	EFT	Full time	Part time	EFT
Male						
Female						
Total						

Note: To calculate effective full time equivalents (EFT) for part time students assume a notional full time load is 15 credit hours and divide the number of credit hours taken by each student by 15. (Use this formula only for part time students)

Confirmed enrollments at the beginning of the current year

	Male	Female	Total
First Year			
Second Year			
Third Year			
Fourth Year			
Fifth Year			
Sixth Year			
Total			

Number of Graduates in Most Recent Year

	Undergraduate	Graduate
Male		
Female		
Total		

Staffing

No of Staff	On Campus			Distance Education		
	Full time	Part time	EFT	Full time	Part time	EFT
Teaching staff						
Other						

staff						

Notes: The number of teaching staff should include tutors, lecturers, and assistant, associate and full professors whether involved with teaching, research or both teaching and research. The number should not include research, teaching or laboratory assistants. Academic staff who are responsible for overseeing the planning and delivery of the teaching programs (e.g. head of department) should be included in the number. Part time teaching staff should be included on a full time equivalent basis by calculating the number of credit hours taught as a proportion of full time teaching load for each person's level of appointment.

Teaching Staff Highest Qualifications

	Doctor		Master		Other		Total	
	No	Percent	No	Percent	No	Percent	No	Percent
Male								
Female								
Total								

B. Self-Study Process

Provide a summary description of procedures followed and administrative arrangements for the self- study. Include an organization chart. Membership and terms of reference for committees and /or working parties should be attached.

C. Mission and Goals of the Program

Mission of Program

2. Major Goals and Objectives for Development of the Program (This item refers to major goals and objectives for the development and improvement of the program, not the objectives for student learning outcomes) Objectives should be expressed in terms that are sufficiently specific for achievement to be monitored and assessed, and include timelines for achievement)

3. Key Performance Indicators (List indicators and benchmarks that have been selected to provide evidence of the quality of the program or the achievement of goals/objectives for its development.)

--

D. Program Context

<p>Significant Elements in the External Environment (including any important recent changes)</p> <p>Summarize any significant features of the external environment including changes affecting the delivery of the program or the skills required for graduates in the period since the last periodic self study or since the program was introduced. (For example: local national or international economic developments, significant recent research in the field, technological changes affecting skill requirements, employment demand, government policies on higher education or on matters affecting the fields for which students are being prepared, national or international developments in professional practice in the field.)</p>
<p>Changes in the Institution Affecting the Program.</p> <p>Summarize any significant changes within the institution affecting the delivery of the program.</p>

3. Note any implications for changes that may be required in the mission and goals, content, or methods of delivery of the program as a result of changes noted under 1 and 2.

E. Program Developments

1. Summary of changes made in the program in the period since the previous self-study or since the program was introduced. This should include such things as courses added or deleted or significant changes in their content, changes in approaches to teaching or student assessment, or program evaluation processes etc.

2. Apparent Program Completion Rate
 (Show the number of students successfully completing the program in each of the last three years, and the number of students who started the program in each group----- years previously (e.g. If 120 students finished a four year program in 2009 and 200 students started it in 2005 and the apparent completion rate would be 60%)

Academic Year	Number of Students Completing the Program	Number of Students who Commenced the Program in this Group XXXX Years	Apparent Completion Rate *
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		Previously	

* Apparent completion rate is the number of students completing the program as a percentage of the number in that student cohort commencing the program -----years previously.

3. Year to year progression rates. (Latest year)

Proportion of students who commenced each year level in the previous year who passed and continued to a higher year level the current year.

Commenced in Year 1 and continued to commence in Year 2 %

Commenced in Year 2 and continued to commence in Year 3 %

Commenced in Year 3 and continued to commence in Year 4 %

Commenced in Year 4 and continued to graduate %

(Note: In programs where there are common first (or first and second) years the figures should include numbers in the early years for the combined group and a note included to explain what has been done)

Comment on trends in year to year progression rates (i.e. Increasing, decreasing, likely reasons for change (if any), significance of trends)

4. Comparison of planned and actual enrollments.

Year	Planned Enrolments	Actual Enrolments

Comment and provide an explanation if there are significant differences between planned and actual numbers.

F. Program Evaluation in Relation to Goals and Objectives for Development of the Program

(See items C 2 and C 3 above)

(Note: (i) Reports on these items should be expanded as necessary to include tables, charts or other appropriate forms of evidence, including trends and comparisons with past performance, or with other institutions where relevant.)

(ii) Wherever relevant, information should be provided on key performance indicators that relate to the matter discussed.

1. (State goal/objective)

Desired benchmark or standard of performance

Result Achieved

Comment

2. (State goal/objective)

Desired benchmark or standard of performance

Result Achieved

Comment

3. (State goal/objective)

Desired benchmark or standard of performance

Result Achieved

Comment

4. (State goal/objective)

Desired benchmark or standard of performance

Result Achieved

Comment

5. (goal/objective)

Desired benchmark or standard of performance

Result Achieved

Comment

(Continue as required for additional goals/objectives)

G. Evaluation in Relation to Quality Standards (Refer to Standards for Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Higher Education Programs)

Reports should be provided under each of the quality standards set out in the Standards for Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Higher Education Programs.

To ensure a full understanding of the report by external reviewers unfamiliar with the institution or this program (either local or international), a brief explanatory note should be included giving background information or explanations of processes relevant to the standard concerned.

The reports should summarize the process followed in investigating performance in relation to each standard. This should be explained in sufficient detail for an external reviewer to form an opinion on the appropriateness and adequacy of the investigation.

A vital element in these reports is to provide specific data to show trends, support conclusions, and make appropriate comparisons with other institutions selected to provide benchmarks for evaluation of performance. This data can include key performance indicators, other statistical information, figures derived from survey results, student results (with standards verified), numbers of refereed publications or citations, usage rates of services or anything also that provides clear evidence about the matter being evaluated. A simple assertion that something is good, or needs improvement, is not sufficient without evidence to back it up. Quantitative data can be included in summary form or provided in attachments and referred to in the text. If priorities for improvement have been determined or initiatives to deal with areas of concern have already undertaken this should be noted and any initial results reported.

The report should deal with all locations where the program is offered and the description of procedures should include information about how evaluations were conducted in different locations. This is particularly important if there are different sections for male and female students. The procedures followed in each section should be explained as well as the processes for planning the evaluation and coordination of the final report. If there are significant differences between analyses or evaluations of delivery of the program in different locations (i.e. either sections for male and female students or delivery in different locations), these should be noted and comments made about reasons for the differences and any response that should be made because of them. This applies to all the standards, not only to Standard 2 which includes a sub-section dealing with relationships between sections for male and female students.

It is not necessary to provide a detailed report on every item in every sub section of each standard. The completed self evaluation scales will provide that more comprehensive coverage. However the report must include at least: (a) Items where performance is poor or significantly different in different sections. (b) Items where performance is considered very good and evidence of strong performance can be provided. (c) Items that have been selected for special consideration as a result of strategic planning or previous evaluations. (d) Items that are particularly significant for evaluation of quality such as verification of standards of student achievement, use of appropriate indicators and benchmarks, performance on KPI's in comparisons with selected benchmarks.

Attach completed rating self evaluation scales from the Standards for Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Higher Education Programs.

Standard 1. Mission and Objectives (Overall Rating _____ Stars)

The mission of the program must be consistent with that for the institution and apply that mission to the particular goals and requirements of the program concerned. It must clearly and appropriately define the program's principal purposes and priorities and be influential in guiding planning and action.

Explanatory note about development and use of the mission.

Description of process for investigation and preparation of report on this standard.

Evaluation of Quality of Mission and Objectives. Refer to evidence obtained and provide a report including a summary of particular strengths, areas requiring improvement, and priorities for action.

Special Note: Evidence to support conclusions should be clearly stated and discussed.

This evidence should include specific Key Performance Indicators, including those identified by the NCAA and others selected by the institution for its planning purposes. In each case the indicator should be stated and results achieved compared with what was planned for, and future performance targets set where appropriate. Evidence should include internal benchmarks (comparisons across the institution or over time) and external comparisons with other comparable institutions.

Standard 2. Program Administration (Overall Rating _____ Stars)

Program administration must provide effective leadership and reflect an appropriate balance between accountability to senior management and the governing board of the institution within which the program is offered, and flexibility to meet the specific requirements of the program concerned. Planning processes must involve stakeholders (e.g. students, professional bodies, industry representatives, teaching staff) in establishing goals and objectives and reviewing and responding to results achieved. If a program is offered in sections for male and female students resources for the program must be comparable in both sections, there must be effective communication between

them, and full involvement in planning and decision making processes. The quality of delivery of courses and the program as a whole must be regularly monitored with adjustments made promptly in response to this feedback and to developments in the external environment affecting the program.

Explanatory note about program administration arrangements.

Description of process for investigation and preparation of report on this standard.

Evaluation of quality of program administration. Refer to evidence obtained about the subsections of the standard and provide a report including a summary of particular strengths, areas requiring improvement, and priorities for action

Special Note: Evidence to support conclusions should be clearly stated and discussed. This evidence should include specific Key Performance Indicators, including those identified by the NCAA and others selected by the institution for its planning purposes. In each case the indicator should be stated and results achieved compared with what was planned for, and future performance targets set where appropriate. Evidence should include internal benchmarks (comparisons across the institution or over time) and external comparisons with other comparable institutions.

Standard 3. Management of Program Quality Assurance (Overall Rating _____ Stars)

Teaching and other staff involved in the program must be committed to improving both their own performance and the quality of the program as a whole. Regular evaluations of quality must be undertaken within each course based on valid evidence and appropriate benchmarks, and plans for improvement made and implemented. Central importance must be attached to student learning outcomes with each course contributing to the achievement of overall program objectives.

Explanatory note. Describe and comment on the quality assurance processes used in the program, particularly relating to indicators and benchmarks of performance and verification of standards.

Description of process for investigation and preparation of report on this standard.

Evaluation of quality of management of program quality assurance. Refer to evidence about the standard and subsections within it and provide a report including a summary of strengths, areas requiring improvement, and priorities for action

Special Note: Evidence to support conclusions should be clearly stated and discussed. This evidence should include specific Key Performance Indicators, including those identified by the NCAA and others selected by the institution for its planning purposes. In each case the indicator should be stated and results achieved compared with what was planned for, and future performance targets set where appropriate. Evidence should include internal benchmarks (comparisons across the institution or over time) and external comparisons with other comparable institutions.

Standard 4. Learning and Teaching. (Overall Rating_____ Stars)

Student learning outcomes must be clearly specified, consistent with the National Qualifications Framework and requirements for employment or professional practice. Standards of learning must be assessed and verified through appropriate processes and benchmarked against demanding and relevant external reference points. Teaching staff must be appropriately qualified and experienced for their particular teaching responsibilities, use teaching strategies suitable for different kinds of learning outcomes and participate in activities to improve their teaching effectiveness. Teaching quality and the effectiveness of programs must be evaluated through student assessments and graduate and employer surveys with evidence from these sources used as a basis for plans for improvement.

The standard for learning and teaching is the most important consideration in a program self-study. Information provided should include indicators used as evidence of performance and priorities and strategies for improvement. Reference should be made to the results of processes followed. For example if steps were taken to check the standards of student achievement against appropriate external benchmarks, what was done, and what conclusions were reached?

Information provided in reports of surveys or special investigations or in annual program reports need not be repeated in full but should be summarized and information given about where more detailed information can be seen.

Explanatory notes about processes followed in administration of learning and teaching relating to the following sub-standards should be included in each section below.

Description of process for investigation and preparation of report on the standard for learning and teaching. (Additional information can be provided in the sub-sections below if necessary.)

Special Note: In all the subsections below evidence to support conclusions should be clearly stated and discussed. This evidence should include specific Key Performance Indicators, including those identified by the NCAAA and others selected by the institution for its planning purposes. In each case the indicator should be stated and results achieved compared with what was planned for, and future performance targets set where appropriate. Evidence should include internal benchmarks (comparisons across the institution or over time) and external comparisons with other comparable institutions.

Subsection 4.1 Student Learning Outcomes (Overall Rating _____ Stars)

Describe processes for ensuring the appropriateness and adequacy of intended student learning outcomes from the program. Include action taken to ensure consistency of the intended student learning outcomes with professional or occupational employment requirements as indicated by expert advice or requirements of professional bodies or relevant accrediting agencies with the National Qualifications Framework. The report should include the results of the processes, not just conclusions about whether processes were used. (Note that evidence on the standards of student achievement of these intended learning outcomes should be considered in sub-section 4.4 below)

Evaluation of intended student learning outcomes. Refer to evidence about the appropriateness and adequacy of the intended learning outcomes for students in this program and provide a report including a summary of strengths, areas requiring improvement, and priorities for action.

Subsection 4.2 Program Development Processes (Overall Rating _____ Stars)

Describe processes followed for developing the program and implementing changes that might be needed.

Evaluation of program development processes. Refer to evidence and provide a report including a summary of strengths, areas requiring improvement, and priorities for action.

Subsection 4.3 Program Evaluation and Review Processes (Overall Rating _____ Stars)

Describe processes followed for program evaluation and review.

Evaluation of program evaluation and review processes. Refer to evidence and provide a report including a summary of strengths, areas requiring improvement, and priorities for action.

In addition to providing information about the quality of these processes, this section should include conclusions were reached about the quality of the program as a result of using those processes. Reference should be made to data on indicators and survey results as appropriate.

Subsection 4.4 Student Assessment (Overall Rating _____ Stars)

Describe strategies for student assessment in the program and the processes used to verify standards of student achievement.

Evaluation of student assessment processes. Refer to evidence about effectiveness of student assessment processes. In addition to evaluation of the processes followed this sub-section should also include evidence about the standards of student learning outcomes achieved in comparison with appropriate benchmarks. The report on this sub-section should include a summary of strengths, areas requiring improvement, and priorities for action.

Subsection 4.5 Educational Assistance for Students (Overall Rating _____ Stars)

Provide a summary of what assistance is provided in relation to the matters listed in this sub-section of the standard (e.g. orientation programs, office hours, identification and assistance for students in need, referrals to support services etc.).

Evaluation of processes for educational assistance for students. Refer to evidence about the appropriateness and effectiveness of processes for assistance of students in this program. (e.g. Is the assistance what is needed for these students, is it actually provided as planned, and how is it evaluated by students). The report should include a summary of strengths, areas requiring improvement, and priorities for action.

Subsection 4.6 Quality of Teaching (Overall Rating _____ Stars)

Information should be provided about the planning of teaching strategies to develop the intended learning outcomes of the program, for evaluating quality of teaching, and processes for preparation and consideration of course and program reports. This section should include a table indicating the proportion of teaching staff whose teaching is regularly assessed in student surveys (or by other mechanisms).

Evaluation of quality of teaching. Refer to evidence about teaching quality and provide a report including a summary of strengths, areas requiring improvement, and priorities for action. The report should include a summary of data from student surveys used for course and overall program evaluations, with information provided about sample size and response rates on those surveys. Comparative data from other similar surveys should be included.

Subsection 4.7 Support for Improvements in Quality of Teaching (Overall Rating _____ Stars)

Describe strategies for improvement of teaching. Include a table showing the extent staff participation in training and/or other activities designed for the improvement of teaching and other related professional development activities. The description should include processes used for investigating and dealing with situations where evidence suggests there may be problems in teaching quality, and arrangements for recognizing outstanding teaching performance.

Evaluation of arrangements for supporting improvements in quality of teaching. Refer to evidence about the effectiveness of strategies used and provide a report including a summary of strengths, areas requiring improvement, and priorities for action. This

evidence could include matters such as trend data in student course evaluations and survey responses from staff participating in programs offered.

Subsection 4.8 Qualifications and Experience of Teaching Staff (Overall Rating _____ Stars)

Comment on qualifications and experience of teaching staff relating to program requirements. A table should be attached listing staff teaching in the program, their highest academic qualification, with an indication beside their names if the courses they teach are within the field of their advanced study)

Evaluation of qualifications and experience of teaching staff. Refer to evidence and provide a report including a summary of strengths, areas requiring improvement, and priorities for action.

Subsection 4.9 Field Experience Activities (if used in the program) (Overall Rating _____ Stars)

Describe processes for planning field experience activities and planning for improvement.

Evaluation of field experience activities including evaluation of processes for planning and managing them. Refer to evidence and provide a report including a summary of strengths, areas requiring improvement, and priorities for action.

Subsection 4.10 Partnership Arrangements With Other Institutions (if these exist)
(Overall Rating _____ Stars)

If partnerships have been established with other institutions to assist with the planning and or delivery of the program describe what is done through those partnerships and explain what has been done to evaluate the effectiveness of those activities.

Evaluation of partnership arrangements. (if any) Refer to evidence and provide a report including a summary of strengths, areas requiring improvement, and priorities for action.

Standard 5. Student Administration and Support Services (Overall Rating _____ Stars)

Admission processes must be efficient, fair, and responsive to the needs of students entering the program. Clear information about program requirements and criteria for admission and program completion must be readily available for prospective students and when required at later stages during the program. Mechanisms for student appeals and dispute resolution must be clearly described, made known, and fairly administered. Career advice must be provided in relation to occupations related to the fields of study dealt with in the program.

Much of the responsibility for this standard will rest with institutional rather than program administration and arrangements will differ between institutions. However regardless of who is responsible this standard is important in assessing the quality of the program. In this section comment should be made not only on what is done within the department or program, but also on how the services provided elsewhere in the institution affect the quality of the program and the learning outcomes of students.

Explanatory note about student administration arrangements and support services.

Describe the processes used to evaluate performance in relation to this standard.

Evaluation of student administration arrangements and support services for students in the

program. Refer to evidence about the standard and subsections within it and provide a report including a summary of strengths, areas requiring improvement, and priorities for action.

Special Note: Evidence to support conclusions should be clearly stated and discussed. This evidence should include specific Key Performance Indicators, including those identified by the NCAAA and others selected by the institution for its planning purposes. In each case the indicator should be stated and results achieved compared with what was planned for, and future performance targets set where appropriate. Evidence should include internal benchmarks (comparisons across the institution or over time) and external comparisons with other comparable institutions.

6. Learning Resources (Overall Rating _____ Stars)

Learning resource materials and associated services must be adequate for the requirements of the program and the courses offered within it and accessible when required for students in the program. Information about requirements must be made available by teaching staff in sufficient time for necessary provisions to be made for resources required, and staff and students must be involved in evaluations of what is provided. Specific requirements for reference material and on-line data sources and for computer terminals and assistance in using this equipment will vary according to the nature of the program and the approach to teaching.

Explanatory note about processes for provision of learning resources for the program, including opportunities provided for teaching staff or program administrators to arrange for necessary resources to be made available, information about services provided and times available, equivalence of provisions for different sections, etc.

Describe the processes followed to investigate this standard and summarize the evidence obtained.

Evaluation of learning resources for students in the program. Refer to evidence about the

standard and subsections within it and provide a report including a summary of strengths, areas requiring improvement, and priorities for action.

Special Note: Evidence to support conclusions should be clearly stated and discussed. This evidence should include specific Key Performance Indicators, including those identified by the NCAA and others selected by the institution for its planning purposes. In each case the indicator should be stated and results achieved compared with what was planned for, and future performance targets set where appropriate. Evidence should include internal benchmarks (comparisons across the institution or over time) and external comparisons with other comparable institutions.

7. Facilities and Equipment (Overall Rating _____ Stars)

Adequate facilities and equipment must be available for the teaching and learning requirements of the program. Use of facilities and equipment should be monitored and regular assessments of adequacy made through consultations with teaching and other staff and students.

Much of the responsibility for this standard will rest with institutional rather than program administration. However regardless of who is responsible for provision of facilities and equipment their adequacy can have a significant effect on the quality of a program. In this section comment should be made on matters that impact on the quality of delivery of the program regardless of who has responsibility for them. These matters would include, for example, adequacy of classroom and laboratory facilities, availability and maintenance of equipment, appropriateness for the program of scheduling arrangements, and availability, maintenance, and technical support for IT equipment in meeting program needs.

Explanatory note about arrangements for provision of facilities and equipment.

Describe the processes used to evaluate the quality of provision of facilities and equipment for the program.

Evaluation of facilities and equipment for the program. Refer to evidence about the standard and subsections within it and provide a report including a summary of strengths, areas requiring improvement, and priorities for action.

Special Note: Evidence to support conclusions should be clearly stated and discussed. This evidence should include specific Key Performance Indicators, including those identified by the NCAA and others selected by the institution for its planning purposes. In each case the indicator should be stated and results achieved compared with what was planned for, and future performance targets set where appropriate. Evidence should include internal benchmarks (comparisons across the institution or over time) and external comparisons with other comparable institutions.

8. Financial Planning and Management (Overall Rating _____ Stars)

Financial resources must be sufficient for the effective delivery of the program. Program requirements must be made known sufficiently far in advance to be considered in institutional budgeting. Budgetary processes should allow for long term planning over at least a three year period. Sufficient flexibility must be provided for effective management and responses to unexpected events and this flexibility must be combined with appropriate accountability and reporting mechanisms.

(Much of the responsibility for activities relating to this standard may rest with institutional rather than program administration. However regardless of who is responsible the adequacy of resources and financial planning and management can affect the quality of the program. In this section the effect of financial planning and management arrangements on the program should be considered in this section, as well as matters that are carried out by program administrators themselves.)

9. Employment Processes (Overall Rating _____ Stars)

Teaching and other staff must have the knowledge and experience needed for their particular teaching or other responsibilities and their qualifications and experience must be verified before appointment. New teaching staff must be thoroughly briefed about the program and their teaching responsibilities before they begin. Performance of all teaching and other staff must be periodically evaluated, with outstanding performance recognized and support provided for professional development and improvement in teaching skills.

(Much of the responsibility for this standard may rest with institutional rather than program administration. However regardless of who is responsible employment processes will have a significant effect on the quality of the program. In this section comment should be made on employment matters that affect the quality of the program regardless of who manages them or determines the policies that affect them. These matters include at least the appointment of appropriately qualified faculty, their participation in relevant professional development and scholarly activities, and their preparation for participation in the program.)

Explanatory note about recruitment and other employment activities that relate to this standard..

Describe processes used to consider quality of performance in relation to this standard.

Evaluation of employment processes for the program. Refer to evidence about the standard and subsections within it and provide a report including a summary of strengths, areas requiring improvement, and priorities for action.

Special Note: Evidence to support conclusions should be clearly stated and discussed. This evidence should include specific Key Performance Indicators, including those identified by the NCAA and others selected by the institution for its planning purposes. In each case the indicator should be stated and results achieved compared with what was planned for, and future performance targets set where appropriate. Evidence should include internal benchmarks (comparisons across the institution or over time) and external comparisons with other comparable institutions.

10. Research (Overall Rating _____ Stars)

All staff teaching higher education programs must be involved in sufficient appropriate scholarly activities to ensure they remain up to date with developments in their field, and those developments should be reflected in their teaching. Staff teaching in post graduate programs or supervising higher degree research students must be actively involved in research in their field. Adequate facilities and equipment must be available to support the research activities of teaching staff and post graduate students to meet these requirements in areas relevant to the program. Staff research contributions must be recognized and reflected in evaluation and promotion criteria.

(Expectations for research will vary according to the nature and mission of the institution and the level of the program (e.g. college or university, undergraduate or postgraduate program). In this section particular comment should be made on the extent and quality of research activities of faculty teaching in the program, and on how their research and other current research in the field is reflected in teaching.)

Explanatory note about nature and extent of research activities associated with the program or carried out by staff teaching in it.

Describe the processes used to evaluate performance in relation to this standard.

Evaluation of research activities associated with the program and of staff teaching in it. Provide a report about the standard and subsections within it. Tables should be provided indicating the amount of research activity and other participation in scholarly activity and comparisons with appropriate benchmarks.

The report should include a summary of strengths, areas requiring improvement, and priorities for action.

Special Note: Evidence to support conclusions should be clearly stated and discussed. This evidence should include specific Key Performance Indicators, including those identified by the NCAAA and others selected by the institution for its planning purposes. In each case the indicator should be stated and results achieved compared with what was planned for, and future performance targets set where appropriate. Evidence should include internal benchmarks (comparisons across the institution or over time) and external comparisons with other comparable institutions.

11. Relationships with the Community (Overall Rating _____ Stars)

Significant and appropriate contributions must be made to the community in which the institution is established drawing on the knowledge and experience of staff and the needs of the community for that expertise. Community contributions should include both activities initiated and carried out by individuals and more formal programs of assistance arranged by the institution or by program administrators. Activities should be documented and made known in the institution and the community and staff contributions appropriately recognized within the institution.

Explanatory note about community activities carried out in connection with the program.

Comments should include reference to interactions with the community by faculty associated with the program as well as with program relationships of the kind referred to in subsection 11.2.

Describe the processes used to evaluate performance in relation to this standard and summarize the evidence obtained.

Evaluation of the extent and quality of community activities associated with the program and of staff teaching in it. Provide a report about the standard and subsections within it including tables showing the extent of community activities and a summary of strengths, areas requiring improvement, and priorities for action

Special Note: Evidence to support conclusions should be clearly stated and discussed. This evidence should include specific Key Performance Indicators, including those identified by the NCAAA and others selected by the institution for its planning purposes. In each case the indicator should be stated and results achieved compared with what was planned for, and future performance targets set where appropriate. Evidence should include internal benchmarks (comparisons across the institution or over time) and external comparisons with other comparable institutions.

H. Review of Courses

1. Describe processes followed in reviewing courses. (e.g. Surveys of graduates, faculty, or members of the profession, analysis of student course evaluations, review of course and program reports, interviews with faculty, comparison with similar programs elsewhere, consultancy advice, etc.)

2. Course Evaluations

Summary report on strengths and weaknesses in courses and any other conclusions from the processes described under F1 above.

(Note that individual course reports, student course evaluation reports and the most recent annual program report should be available for reference.)

I. Independent Evaluations

Describe the process used to obtain independent comment on the quality of the program and the reliability and validity of analyses carried out in the report. Processes may include a review of documentation by an experienced and independent person familiar with similar programs at other institutions and who could comment on relative standards, consultancy advice or a report by a review panel, or even the results of an accreditation review by an independent agency. An independent evaluation may be conducted in relation to the total self-study, or involve a number of separate comments by different people on different issues.

Summary of matters raised by independent evaluator(s)

Comment on matters raised by independent evaluator(s) (Agree, disagree, further consideration required, action proposed, etc.)

J Conclusions

1. List and briefly describe aspects of the program that are particularly successful or that demonstrate high quality.

2. List and briefly describe aspects of the program that are less than satisfactory and that need to be improved.

K. Action Proposals

These should be based on the matters identified in sections F, G, H, and I above and indicate specific actions proposed to deal with the most important priorities for action identified in those sections.

1. Changes in Course Requirements (if any)

List and briefly state reasons for any changes recommended in course requirements, e.g.
Courses no longer needed;
New courses required;
Courses merged together or subdivided;
Required courses made optional or elective courses made compulsory;
Changes in pre-requisites or co-requisites

Changes in the allocation of responsibility for learning outcomes as shown in the course planning matrix.

2. Action Recommendations.

Recommendations should be made for action to be taken for further improvements or to overcome problems or weaknesses identified. The actions recommended should be expressed in specific terms rather than as general statements. Each action recommendations should indicate who should be responsible for the action, timelines, and any necessary resources.

Action Recommendation 1
Person (s) responsible
Timelines (For total initiative and for major stages of development)
Resources Required

Action Recommendation 2.
Person(s) responsible
Timelines

Resources Required

Continue for further action recommendations.

The Periodic Program Self Study Report should be on A4 paper, unbound, printed on one side, page numbered, and with a table of contents for easy reference. A list of acronyms used in the report should be included as an attachment.

In addition to the self-study report, the following documents should be provided in hard copy and desirably in electronic format as well.

Completed scales from the *Self-Evaluation Scales for Higher Education Programs*. The completed scales should include star ratings, independent comments, and indications of priorities for improvement as requested in the document, and should be accompanied by a description of the processes used in investigating and making evaluations.

The Program Specification

An annual program report for the most recent year

A brief summary of the outcomes of previous accreditation processes (if any) including program accreditations and any special issues or recommendations emerging from them.

A copy of the program description from the bulletin or handbook including descriptions of courses, program requirements and regulations

Six copies of these documents should be provided to the Commission four months prior to the date of the review.

The following documents should be available for the review panel during the visit.

Members of the panel may ask for some of it to be sent to them in advance.

Course specifications for courses in the program and annual course and program reports

Faculty handbook or similar document with information about faculty and staffing policies, professional development policies and procedures and related information.

CVs for faculty and staff teaching in the program and a listing of courses for which they are responsible This information should include the highest qualification (and if appropriate other qualifications and experience relevant to their teaching responsibilities).

Copies of survey responses from students and other sources of information about quality such as employers, other faculty, etc

Statistical data summarizing responses to these surveys for several years to indicate trends in evaluations

Statistical data on employment of graduates from the program
Representative samples of student work and assessments of that work.

If the program is one that is offered by a private institution and that has provisional accreditation a supplementary report should be attached listing requirements of the Ministry or other organization to which it is responsible for special accreditation, and providing details of the extent to which those requirements have been met.

ATTACHMENT 2 (n)

Guidelines on Using the Template for a Periodic Program Self Study Report

General Comment	
<p>A periodic program self study report should be considered as a research report on the quality of a program. It should include sufficient information to inform a reader who is unfamiliar with the institution (local or international) about the process of investigation and the evidence on which conclusions are based to have reasonable confidence that those conclusions are soundly based.</p> <p>Other documents such as general program descriptions in a form provided to students, a program specification, and completed self evaluation scales will be available separately and full details of these need not be repeated in the self study report. However the report should include summary information where necessary and additional explanations about recent developments or special objectives or priorities if required to explain what is done in the program.</p> <p>The template includes a number of sections and headings to assist in preparing the report. These should be followed in the report. However preparation of the report is not just a matter of filling in the spaces in the template. Evidence should be cited in tables or other forms of data presentation to support conclusions, with comparative data included where appropriate, and reference made to other reports or surveys with more detailed information. The writer should take as much space as necessary to provide the information required in a connected descriptive research report.</p>	
Institution, College/Department	Show the name of the institution and the college or department responsible for the program
A. General Information	
1. Program title and code	Write the title and institutional code for the program.
2. Credit hours.	Write the number of credit hours required to complete the program. If there can be variations in the credit hours for different majors or tracks in the program these details should be shown.
3. Award (s) granted on completion of the program	Write the title of the academic award or qualification granted by the institution for students who complete the program.
4. Major tracks/pathways within the program	Write the title of any major tracks or pathways within the program. A major track or pathway is one in which a specified group of courses are undertaken, normally in the second half of a program, and that leads to a specialization that is recognized by the institution. Individual selection by a student among a number of elective courses would not be regarded as a major

	track or pathway.
5. Professional occupations for which students are prepared in the program	Write the name of any professions or occupations the program is designed to prepare students for. (Note that students may enter other occupations or professions. However this item relates to what the program is designed for, not what individuals may eventually do.)
6. Name of program coordinator	Write the name of the faculty member responsible for coordinating or managing the program. This may be the head of department or another person given that responsibility.
7. Name of person responsible for leadership/management of the self study	Write the name and administrative position of the person given responsibility for leading or coordinating the self study of the program and preparation of this report.
8. Location of program if not on the main campus.	Indicate the location if the program is offered away from the main campus. If it is offered both on the main campus and in one or more other locations details should be provided. If it is offered in several locations (for example in another town or city or separately on both men's and women's campuses) information should be provided separately for each location and evaluations should consider the significance of any differences in quality that are shown.
9. Date of approval of program specification within the institution	Indicate the date on which the program specification was approved.
10. Date of most recent previous self-study (if any)	If a periodic self study of the program has been conducted previously indicate the date (semester and year) when this self study was completed. (This item does not refer to annual program reports)
11. Date of Report	Write the date the report was completed.
B. Self-Study Process	
Summary of procedures followed.	Provide a summary of the arrangements made for the conduct of the self-study. This should include administrative arrangements and time lines, information about working parties or sub-committees established and their responsibilities, and a brief description of procedures followed. Details of membership of sub committees and any other details needed for a reader to understand what was done should be included as attachments.
C. Mission and Goals of the Program	
1. Mission of Program	Write the brief mission statement for the program
2. Major Goals/Objectives for Development of the	List the major goals or objectives established for the development of the program. What is wanted here is not the

Program	learning outcomes for students which are dealt with separately, but program development goals. They could include such things as reviewing the program to improve provision of needed skills in industry, increasing numbers of students enrolled, increasing completion or progression rates, better orientation and preparation for new students, improvements in qualifications of staff, introducing assessments of teaching or participation of faculty in professional development activities, updated equipment, reductions in differences between quality of program delivery in different locations etc. The goals or objectives should be sufficiently specific for performance to be measured and timelines for achievement should be specified.
3. Performance Indicators	List performance indicators. These should include the KPIs specified by the NCAAA that are applicable to individual programs, and in addition include matters identified by the institution or college, or by those responsible for the particular program, and should also include indicators that have been selected to provide evidence of achievement of the goals or objectives stated under C2. above.
D. Program Context	
1. Significant Changes in the External Environment	Summarize any significant features of the external environment including changes in it affecting the delivery of the program or the skills required for graduates in the period since the last periodic self study or since the program was introduced. (For example: local national or international economic developments, significant recent research in the field, technological changes affecting skill requirements, employment demand, government policies on higher education or on matters affecting the fields for which students are being prepared, national or international developments in professional practice in the field.) Note that comments may have already been included in annual program reports. However in this report changes should be considered over a longer time frame and a more in-depth consideration given to implications for changes needed in the program.
2. Changes in the Institution Affecting the Program	Summarize any significant changes within the institution affecting the delivery of the program. Changes could relate to institutional policies and priorities, development of courses or programs in related areas facilities or equipment, staffing or funding issues, introduction of foundation year programs, etc.
3. Consequences for the Program of these Changes in Context	Note any implications of these external influences or changes for the program. These could relate to the mission and goals, methods of delivery, changes in courses or other matters. Some of these things may already have been done as the changes

	<p>became apparent over the period. However in this item they should still be noted, comment made on any responses that have already been made, and consideration given to whether any further change is needed in response to changes in the environment. Note that the next item (E 1.) a request is made for information about any changes made in the program. This may involve some repetition, but consideration of the two questions raises the issue of whether changes already made are an adequate response to changes in the environment.</p>
<p>E. Program Developments</p>	
<p>1. Changes Made in the Program</p>	<p>Summarize changes made in the program since the program was introduced or since the last periodic self-study. This item refers to changes made for any reason including responses to evaluation or changes in plans and policies for delivery of the program. To provide a full picture changes referred to in D3.should be listed again but should not need explanation.</p>
<p>2. Statistical summary</p>	<p>Complete the table to provide summary information about enrolments and completion rates in the program and trends in those numbers. The table is intended to highlight some key figures relevant to the quality of the program.</p> <p>The apparent completion rate is an indicator rather than an actual rate since some students could take longer than minimum time to complete the program and some could be admitted with advanced standing and take less time. However it provides a useful indicator for initial analysis. If there are special circumstances in any year that affect the apparent completion rate (for example if an unusually high number of students were admitted with advanced standing) this should be noted and the special factors taken into account in interpreting the results.</p>
<p>3. Year to year progression rates</p>	<p>Complete the table to provide information about year to year progression rates in the program. The table asks only for the most recent year. However if there have been significant increases or reductions in the rates over time this should be noted in the section that asks for comments, and the significance and implications of the changes discussed. If</p>
<p>4. Comparison of planned and actual enrolments</p>	<p>This question is relevant for new programs that have been given provisional accreditation on criteria that include the adequacy of resources and the viability of the range of courses, both of which are affected by the level of enrolments. For other programs differences between planned and actual enrolments could be significant for the program if significantly more students are enrolled than have been planned for or if students are not enrolling as anticipated.</p>

F. Program Evaluation in Relation to Goals and Objectives for Development of the Program	
	For each of the goals or objectives that were listed in item C 3 show the indicators that were identified to monitor performance, the desired benchmark or standard of performance that was sought, the result that was achieved, and provide a comment about the result. This comment could be an explanation of progress made by the time of the report, or an explanation of events that may have affected the extent to which the objective was achieved. Any implications for future planning should be noted.
G. Evaluation in Relation to Quality Standards.	
	This item deals with evaluations in relation to quality standards specified by the Commission for purposes of quality assurance and accreditation. The template asks for reports in relation to each of the 11 quality standards as they relate to the program, and to each of the sub-sections of the standard for Learning and Teaching. In responding to each item a brief explanation or background information should be included. Completed self evaluation scales will be provided separately and full details of assessments of all items are not required. However items thought to be significant (including those noted in the template) should be discussed and detailed information to support conclusions should be included (in tables or other formats as appropriate) with reference to where more detailed information can be found. Reference should be made to KPIs where they are relevant to the item concerned. Comments should not only relate to processes followed, but also to any specific data resulting from the application of those processes. (e.g. results of student surveys). If there are significant differences between sections for male and female students these should be identified and conclusions made about any action that is required to deal with them.
H. Review of Courses	
1. Processes followed in reviewing courses.	Describe the process followed in reviewing courses. This should include the procedures adopted by a working party or sub-committee given this responsibility and a summary of the kind of information considered in the review. The review should consider course evaluations and course reports, responsiveness to this feedback. It should also consider any changes necessary as a result of changing program requirements that might impact on individual courses.
2. Course Evaluations	A brief summary report should be provided giving an overview of areas of strengths and weaknesses and any other conclusions

	<p>from the processes described under F1 above. Note that individual course reports, student course evaluation reports and the most recent annual program report should be available for reference</p>
I. Independent Evaluations	
1. Process for Independent Review	<p>Describe the process used to get independent comments on the program, the reliability and validity of the evaluative information considered and the conclusions drawn from it. Examples of processes that could be used are given in the template. The person providing this evaluation should be an experienced person with knowledge of programs of this type, preferably from another institution.</p>
2. Summary of matters raised by independent evaluator(s)	<p>Include a brief summary of matters raised and comments made by independent evaluators. Copies of any written reports received should be attached.</p>
3. Comment on matters raised	<p>Those preparing the report may agree or disagree with the comments and suggestions made by independent evaluators, but if they disagree sufficient information should be given to explain their different opinion.</p>
J. Conclusions	
1. Successful Aspects of the Program	<p>List and comment briefly on the most successful or high quality aspects of the program as indicated by the evidence considered in the self-study.</p>
2. Aspects of the Program Requiring Improvement	<p>List and comment briefly on aspects of the program most in need of improvement as indicated by the evidence considered in the self-study.</p>
K. Action Proposals	
1. Changes in Course Requirements	<p>List any changes required in courses as a result of all the evidence considered, including changes in the internal or external environment, achievement of program goals and objectives, evaluations in relation to quality standards, and feedback obtained from various sources including the independent evaluators. Changes could involve removal or addition of courses, mergers of courses or separation into separate courses, changes in required courses or in prerequisites or co-requisites. Or any other matters relating to course content or teaching methodology arising from the review of courses.</p>
2. Action Recommendations	<p>Include recommendations for action plans to deal with matters requiring attention as a result of the analysis in the report. In each case the action should be described in specific terms indicating who is responsible, when action should be undertaken and completed. Any resources required should be identified.</p>

ATTACHMENT 2 (o)

Report on an Institutional Self-Study

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

**The National Commission for Academic Accreditation &
Assessment**

Report on Institutional Self-Study

Introductory Comments

A self study is a thorough examination of all of an institutions functions and activities taking account of its mission and objectives, and the standards for quality assurance and accreditation defined by the NCAAA. Conclusions should be supported by evidence, with verification of analysis and conclusions, and advice from others able to offer informed and independent comment.

A self study report should be considered as a research report on the quality of the institution. It should include sufficient information to inform a reader who is unfamiliar with the institution about the process of investigation and the evidence on which conclusions are based to have reasonable confidence that those conclusions are sound.

Other documents such as university handbooks should be available separately and completed scales from the Self Evaluation Scales for Higher Education Institutions should have been completed and made available with the self study report. Consequently full details of what is included in these documents need not be repeated in the self study report. However this report should include all the necessary information for it to be read as a complete report on the quality of the institution.

The template includes a number of sections and headings to assist in preparing the report. These sections and headings should be followed in the report. However additional information can be included. Throughout the report evidence should be presented in tables or other forms of data presentation to support conclusions, with comparative data included where appropriate, and reference made to other reports or surveys with more detailed information.

The report should be provided as a page numbered document, single sided, with a table of contents. A list of acronyms used in the report should be attached.

A key to writing a successful self-study report is to ensure that processes are fully and clearly described so it can be fully understood by independent external reviewers and that conclusions about quality are supported wherever possible by evidence. An effective self-study report includes numerous references to statistical data and results of stakeholder surveys, and to thorough analysis of this information. Achievement of high quality standards needs to be demonstrated by appropriate comparisons with other good quality institutions selected as benchmarks for this purpose and for planning for improvement. Key performance indicators should be referred to throughout, including both those identified by the NCAAA and others selected by the institution itself for monitoring its performance and planning for improvement.

Template for Report on Institutional Self-Study

For guidance on the completion of this template, please refer to Chapter 1 of Part 2 of this Handbook. And to Section 1.8 which comments on requirements for an institutional self-study report

A. General Information

Name of Institution
Location and Postal Address of the Institution
Website address
Date of Report
Name and contact details for: The person responsible for the preparation of this report; The person to be contacted for further information about the matters discussed in the report if required; The person to be contacted about for arrangements for external review visits.

B. Institutional Profile

An institutional profile should be prepared including the following material:

- A brief summary of the institution’s history, scale and range of activities;
- A brief description of the community where the institution is located including population statistics and any special characteristics that have implications for the institutions programs and .activities
- A description of the management and organizational structure using an organizational chart, list of colleges and departments, and the names and contact details of key individuals;
- A list of campus locations indicating programs offered and student numbers in each location;
- Summary information about the institution’s accreditation status including the outcomes of any previous institutional reviews, and any conditions that were established;
- A description of the institution’s quality assurance arrangements, priorities for development, and any special issues affecting its operations;
- A summary of the institution's strategic plan. (A copy of the actual strategic plan should be available for reference if required.)
- A list of matters that are of particular interest to the institution and on which the institution is seeking comment and advice in the review.
- Attach a plan and or map showing locations of major buildings and facilities.
- Include any major recent awards, accomplishments or strengths.

Statistical Summary

Land and Buildings (If institution operates on several different campuses provide tables for each campus and for the institution as a whole)

	Total Space (Square meters)	Space per Student (Square meters)
Land Area		
Building Space		

Preparatory or Foundation Programs

Streams or Sections	Number of students	Number of staff (EFT)
Total		

Student Enrolments (Not including preparatory or foundation programs)

Students	On Campus Programs			Distance Education Programs		
	Full time	Part time	EFT	Full time	Part time	EFT
Male						
Female						
Total						

Note: To calculate effective full time equivalents (EFT) for part time students assume a notional full time load is 15 credit hours and divide the number of credit hours taken by each student by 15. (Use this formula only for part time students)

Staffing

No of Staff	On Campus Programs			Distance Education Programs		
	Full time	Part time	EFT	Full time	Part time	EFT
Teaching staff						
Other staff						

Notes: The number of teaching staff should include tutors, lecturers, and assistant, associate and full professors whether involved with teaching, research or both teaching and research. The number should not include research, teaching or laboratory assistants. Academic staff who are responsible for overseeing the planning and delivery of teaching programs (e.g. head of department for a department, dean for a college, rector and vice rectors for a university) should be included in the number.

Part time teaching staff should be included on a full time equivalent basis by calculating the number of credit hours taught as a proportion of full time teaching load for each person's level of appointment.

Colleges and Departments (Repeat table for each College)

College Name							
Dean							
Departments	Undergraduate students			Postgraduate students			Head of Dept
	Male	Femal e	Total	Male	Femal e	Total	
Student /Staff Ratio (FTE)							

College Name				Dean			
Departments	Undergraduate students			Postgraduate students			Head of Dept
	Male	Femal e	Total	Male	Femal e	Total	
Student /Staff Ratio (EFT)							

College Name				Dean			
Departments	Undergraduate students			Postgraduate students			Head of Dept
	Male	Femal e	Total	Male	Femal e	Total	
Student /Staff Ratio (EFT)							

Teaching Staff Highest Qualifications

	Doctor		Master		Other		Total	
	No	Percent	No	Percent	No	Percent	No	Percent
Male								
Female								
Total								

Number of Graduates in Most Recent Year

	Undergraduate	Graduate
Male		
Female		
Total		

Apparent Completion Rates

	Undergraduate Programs			Postgraduate Programs	
	Four Year	Five Year	Six Year	Master	Doctor
Male					

Female					
Total					

Note: Apparent completion rate is the number of students who graduated in the most recent year as a percentage of those who commenced those programs in that cohort X years previously. (e.g. For a four year program the number of students who graduated as a percentage of the number who commenced four year programs four years previously)

C. Self-Study Process

Provide a brief description of procedures followed and administrative arrangements for the self study. Include an organization chart. Membership and terms of reference for committees and /or working parties should be attached.

D. Context of the Self Study

1. Environmental Context.

Summary of significant elements of the external environment in which the institution is operating and changes that have occurred recently or are expected to occur (e.g. economic or social developments, population changes, government policies, developments at other institutions with implications for this institution's programs).

2. Institutional Context.

Brief summary of recent developments at the institution with implications for the review.

E. Mission, Goals, and Strategic Objectives for Quality Improvement

1. Mission of the Institution

2. Summary of Strategic Plan and Action Plan(s) for Quality Improvement (The institution's major goals and strategic objectives for quality improvement should be listed, indicating for each objective, the major strategies for development, performance indicators and benchmarks or standards of achievement the institution wishes to achieve.)

F Special Emphasis in the Self-Study (if any)

Indicate any areas of particular interest to the institution in the review. (These may relate to responses to changes in the external or institutional environment, to planning priorities that may have been determined as a result of quality assessments or other strategic priorities, to government policies, etc.)

G. Progress Towards Major Quality Objectives (Refer to Item E2 above)

Assessment of institutional performance in relation to plans or any major quality improvement initiatives in the period under review. These may have been undertaken in response to a previous self study, recommendations or requirements following an external review, or for other reasons.

Brief reports should be provided on each major initiative citing the objective(s), specific data indicating the results achieved, and a comment on reasons for success or failure to achieve the desired results.

1. Objective 1
Result Achieved (Performance in relation to indicators and benchmarks)
Comment
Objective 2
Result Achieved (Performance in relation to indicators and benchmarks)
Comment

(continue for other strategic quality improvement objectives)

H. Evaluation in Relation to Quality Standards

Reports should be given on performance in relation to each of the standards set out in the Standards for Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions. The reports should refer to areas of strength and weakness as indicated by the rating scales in the accompanying document—Self Evaluation Scales for Higher Education Institutions. Reference should also be made, where relevant, to other evidence such as performance indicators and surveys of students, graduates, faculty and employers and tables summarizing research output. If specific numerical data is available it should be included or provided in attachments and referred to in the text. Priorities for improvement should be indicated. If priorities for improvement have already been determined in planning or initiatives already undertaken these should be noted and any initial results reported.

To ensure a full understanding of the report by a person or persons unfamiliar with the institution, e.g. external reviewers (either local or international), a brief explanatory note should be included giving background information or explanations or processes relevant to the standard concerned.

Some of the standards relate to functions that are administered by a central organizational unit for the institution as a whole. Others are decentralized and administered by colleges, departments, or other academic or administrative units in different parts of the institution. Where the functions are decentralized the reports should provide both an overall picture for the institution as a whole, and an indication of areas where quality of performance is particularly good or less than satisfactory. (See suggestions for reporting on decentralized functions in Handbook 2 Internal Quality Assurance Arrangements.)

If the institution is operating in different locations or with major separate administrative centers (e.g., sections for male and female students, or a campus in another city or community) a single report should be provided but any significant differences should be noted and comments made about reasons for the differences and any response that should be made to deal with those differences. Where the institution operates in different locations or sections the descriptions of procedures should indicate how evaluations were conducted in the different locations

It is not necessary to provide a detailed report on every individual item in every subsection of each standard. The completed self evaluation scales will provide that more comprehensive coverage. However the report must include at least (a) Items where performance is poor or significantly different in different sections. (b) Items where performance is considered very good and evidence of strong performance can be provided. (c) Items that have been selected for special consideration as a result of strategic planning or previous evaluations

A vital element in these reports is to provide specific data to support conclusions, show trends, and make appropriate comparisons with other institutions selected to provide benchmarks for evaluation of performance. This data can include statistical information, figures derived from survey results, student results (with standards verified), numbers of refereed publications or citations, usage rates of services or anything also that provides clear evidence about the matter being evaluated. A simple assertion that something is good, or needs improvement, is not sufficient without evidence to back it up.

Attach completed rating self evaluation rating scales from the Self Evaluation Scales for Higher Education Institutions.

1. Mission and Objectives (Overall Rating _____ Stars)

The institution's mission statement must clearly and appropriately define its principal purposes and priorities and be influential in guiding planning and action within the institution.

Explanatory note about development and use of the mission.

Description of process for investigation and preparation of the report on this standard.

Report on subsections of the standard

Special Note: Evidence to support conclusions should be clearly stated and discussed. This evidence should include specific Key Performance Indicators, including those identified by the NCAA and others selected by the institution for its planning

purposes. In each case the indicator should be stated and results achieved compared with what was planned for, and future performance targets set where appropriate. Evidence should include internal benchmarks (comparisons across the institution or over time) and external comparisons with other comparable institutions.

Appropriateness of the Mission

Usefulness of the Mission Statement

Development and Review of the Mission

Use Made of the Mission Statement

Relationship Between Mission and Goals and Objectives

Overall Evaluation of Quality of Mission, Goals and Objectives. Refer to evidence obtained and provide a report based on that evidence and including a summary of particular strengths, areas requiring improvement, and priorities for action

2. Governance and Administration (Overall Rating _____ Stars)

The governing body must provide effective leadership in the interests of the institution as a whole and its clients, through policy development and processes for accountability. Senior administrators must lead the activities of the institution effectively within a clearly defined governance structure. If there are separate sections for male and female students resources must be comparable in both sections, there must be effective communication between them, and full involvement in planning and decision making processes Planning and management must occur within a framework of sound policies and regulations that ensure financial and administrative accountability, and provide an appropriate balance between coordinated planning and local initiative.

Explanatory note about aspects of governance and administration relevant to the matters referred to in this standard that is not already explained in the institutional profile. The note can be in summary form and refer to other documents for further detail.

Description of process for investigation and preparation of report on this standard.

Report on subsections of the standard

Special Note: Evidence to support conclusions should be clearly stated and discussed. This evidence should include specific Key Performance Indicators, including those identified by the NCAAA and others selected by the institution for its planning purposes. In each case the indicator should be stated and results achieved compared with what was planned for, and future performance targets set where appropriate. Evidence should include internal benchmarks (comparisons across the institution or over time) and external comparisons with other comparable institutions.

Governing Body

Leadership

Planning Processes

Relationship Between Sections for Male and Female Students

Institutional Integrity

Internal Policies and Regulations

Organizational Climate

2.6 Associated Companies and Controlled Entities (if applicable)

Overall Evaluation of Quality of Governance and Administration. Refer to evidence obtained and provide a report based on that evidence and including a summary of particular strengths, areas requiring improvement, and priorities for action.

3. Management of Quality Assurance and Improvement (Overall Rating _____ Stars)

Quality assurance processes must involve all sections of the institution and be effectively integrated into normal planning and administrative processes. Criteria for assessment of quality must include inputs, processes and outcomes with a particular focus on outcomes. Processes must be established to ensure that teaching and other staff and students are committed to improvement and regularly evaluate their own performance. Quality must be assessed by reference to evidence based on indicators of performance and challenging external standards.

Explanatory note. Provide a summary explanation of arrangements for quality assurance including major committees and organizational unit(s) and activities carried out at different levels of the institution (including colleges or departments) Include a listing of KPIs for use in the institution, and benchmarks selected for performance.

Description of process for preparation of report on this standard.

Report on subsections of the standard

Special Note: Evidence to support conclusions should be clearly stated and discussed. This evidence should include specific Key Performance Indicators, including those identified by the NCAAA and others selected by the institution for its planning purposes. In each case the indicator should be stated and results achieved compared with what was planned for, and future performance targets set where appropriate. Evidence should include internal benchmarks (comparisons across the institution or over time) and external comparisons with other comparable institutions.

Institutional Commitment to Quality Improvement

Scope of Quality Improvement Processes

Administration of Quality Assurance Processes

Use of Indicators and Benchmarks

2.5 Independent Verification of Standards

Overall Evaluation of Management of Quality Assurance and Improvement. Refer to evidence obtained and provide a report based on that evidence and including a summary of particular strengths, areas requiring improvement, and priorities for action.

4. Learning and Teaching. (Overall Rating _____ Stars)

The institution must have an effective system for ensuring that all programs meet high standards of learning and teaching through initial approvals, monitoring of performance, and provision of institution-wide support services.

In all programs student learning outcomes must be clearly specified, consistent with the National Qualifications Framework and (for professional programs) requirements for employment or professional practice. Standards of learning must be assessed and verified through appropriate processes and benchmarked against demanding and relevant external reference points. Teaching staff must be appropriately qualified and experienced for their particular teaching responsibilities, use teaching strategies appropriate for different kinds of learning outcomes, and participate in activities to improve their teaching effectiveness. Teaching quality and the effectiveness of programs must be evaluated through student assessments and graduate and employer surveys, with feedback used as a basis for plans for improvement.

Description of process for investigation and preparation of report on this standard.

Report on subsections of the standard

Special Note: Evidence to support conclusions should be clearly stated and discussed. This evidence should include specific Key Performance Indicators, including those identified by the NCAA and others selected by the institution for its planning purposes. In each case the indicator should be stated and results achieved compared with what was planned for, and future performance targets set where appropriate. Evidence should include internal benchmarks (comparisons across the institution or over time) and external comparisons with other comparable institutions.

(In sub-section 4.1 a description should be given of the institutions processes for oversight of quality of learning and teaching. In each other subsection include an explanatory statement describing what is done throughout the institution.. If common procedures are not followed this should be indicated and an explanation given of major variations and how the institution as a whole monitors quality of performance.)

Institutional Oversight of Quality of Learning and Teaching

Student Learning Outcomes

Program Development Processes

Program Evaluation and Review Processes

Student Assessment

Educational Assistance for Students

Quality of Teaching

4.7 Support for Improvements in Quality of Teaching

4.8 Qualifications and Experience of Teaching Staff

4.9 Field Experience Activities

4.10 Partnership Arrangements with Other Institutions (If applicable)

Overall Evaluation of Quality of Learning and Teaching. Refer to evidence obtained and provide a report based on that evidence about the extent to which the requirements of the standard of learning are met throughout the institution. The evidence of performance should be provided (or summarized and referred to in other documents) including KPIs, survey reports and other relevant sources of evidence. A general conclusion should be drawn that includes a summary of particular strengths, areas requiring improvement, and priorities for action.

5. Student Administration and Support Services (Overall Rating _____ Stars)

Administration of admissions and student record systems must be reliable and responsive, with confidentiality of records maintained in keeping with stated policies. Students' rights and responsibilities must be clearly defined and understood, with transparent and fair procedures available for discipline and appeals. Mechanisms for academic advice, counselling and support services must be accessible and responsive to student needs. Support services for students must go beyond formal academic requirements and include extracurricular provisions for religious, cultural, sporting, and other activities relevant to the needs of the student body.

Explanatory note about student administration arrangements and support services, including functions carried out centrally and those managed in colleges or departments. For those managed in departments or colleges refer to any relevant institution-wide policies or regulations and describe the processes used by the institution to monitor how effectively local services are provided.

Description of process for preparation of report on this standard.

Report on subsections of the standard

Special Note: Evidence to support conclusions should be clearly stated and discussed. This evidence should include specific Key Performance Indicators, including those identified by the NCAA and others selected by the institution for its planning purposes. In each case the indicator should be stated and results achieved compared with what was planned for, and future performance targets set where appropriate. Evidence should include internal benchmarks (comparisons across the institution or over time) and external comparisons with other comparable institutions.

Student Admissions

Student Records

Student Management

Planning and Evaluation of Student Services

Medical and Counseling Services

Extra-Curricular Activities for Students

Overall Evaluation of Quality of Student Administration and Support Services. Refer to evidence obtained and provide a report based on that evidence that includes a summary of particular strengths, areas requiring improvement, and priorities for action.

6. Learning Resources (Overall Rating _____ Stars)

Learning resources including libraries and provisions for access to electronic and other reference material must be planned to meet the particular requirements of the institution's programs and provided at an adequate level. Library and associated IT facilities must be accessible at times to support independent learning, with assistance provided in finding material required. Facilities must be provided for individual and group study in an environment conducive to effective investigations and research. The services must be evaluated and improved in response to systematic feedback from teaching staff and students.

Explanatory note about provision of learning resources within the institution. This should include information about the extent to which library services are provided centrally or within colleges. If they are provided in different locations, descriptions should be given of any overall institutional coordination and performance monitoring.

Data should be provided about the extent of resource collections (e.g. Books and periodicals and website resources, and information provided about the use of those resources by students and staff in a central location and in different locations if these are provided.

Description of process for investigation and preparation of report on this standard. (if library services are provided in different locations this investigation should deal with provisions throughout the institution and draw conclusions about overall performance and variations between different locations)

Report on subsections of the standard

Special Note: Evidence to support conclusions should be clearly stated and discussed. This evidence should include specific Key Performance Indicators, including those identified by the NCAA and others selected by the institution for its planning purposes. In each case the indicator should be stated and results achieved compared with what was planned for, and future performance targets set where appropriate. Evidence should include internal benchmarks (comparisons across the institution or over time) and external comparisons with other comparable institutions.

Planning and Evaluation

Organization

Support for Users

Resources and Facilities

Overall Evaluation of Learning Resource Provision. Refer to evidence and provide a report based on that evidence that includes a summary of particular strengths, areas requiring improvement, and priorities for action

7. Facilities and Equipment (Overall Rating _____ Stars)

Facilities must be designed or adapted to meet the particular requirements for teaching and learning in the programs offered by the institution, and offer a safe and healthy environment for high quality education. Use of facilities must be monitored and user surveys used to assist in planning for improvement. Adequate provision must be made for classrooms and laboratories, use of computer technology and research equipment by faculty and student and appropriate provision made for associated services such as food services, extracurricular activities, and where relevant, student accommodation.

Explanatory note about administration of arrangements for planning, development and maintenance of facilities and equipment. This should include cross references to other more detailed facilities planning documents.

Description of process for investigation and preparation of report on this standard.

Report on subsections of the standard

Special Note: Evidence to support conclusions should be clearly stated and discussed. This evidence should include specific Key Performance Indicators, including those identified by the NCAA and others selected by the institution for its planning purposes. In each case the indicator should be stated and results achieved compared with what was planned for, and future performance targets set where appropriate. Evidence should include internal benchmarks (comparisons across the institution or over time) and external comparisons with other comparable institutions.

Policy and Planning

Quality and Adequacy of Facilities and Equipment

Management and Administration

Information Technology

Student Residences

Overall Evaluation of Provision of Facilities and Equipment. This report should refer to evidence and relevant benchmarks, and include a summary of particular strengths, areas requiring improvement, and priorities for action

8. Financial Planning and Management (Overall Rating _____ Stars)

Financial resources must be adequate for the programs and services offered and efficiently managed in keeping with program requirements and institutional priorities. Effective systems must be used for budgeting and for financial delegations and accountability providing local flexibility, institutional oversight and effective risk management.

Explanatory note describing budgeting and financial planning and funding submission processes and arrangements for audit. The explanation should include a list of financial reports that are prepared. Information should be given about levels of financial delegation within the institution with reference to other documents that set out institutional policies and regulations relating to these delegations. .

Description of process for investigation and preparation of report on this standard.

Report on subsections of the standard

Special Note: Evidence to support conclusions should be clearly stated and discussed. This evidence should include specific Key Performance Indicators, including those

identified by the NCAAA and others selected by the institution for its planning purposes. In each case the indicator should be stated and results achieved compared with what was planned for, and future performance targets set where appropriate. Evidence should include internal benchmarks (comparisons across the institution or over time) and external comparisons with other comparable institutions.

Financial Planning

Financial Management

Auditing and Risk Management

Overall Evaluation of Financial Management and Planning Processes. The report should refer to relevant evidence and benchmarks and include a summary comment indicating particular strengths, areas requiring improvement, and priorities for action.

9. Employment Processes (Overall Rating _____ Stars)

Teaching and other staff must have the qualifications and experience for effective exercise of their responsibilities and professional development strategies must be followed to ensure continuing improvement in faculty and staff expertise. Performance of all faculty and staff must be evaluated, with outstanding performance recognized and support provided for improvement where required. Effective, fair, and transparent processes must be available for the resolution of conflicts and disputes involving faculty and or staff.

Explanatory note about processes for employment and professional development of teaching and other staff. The explanation should include a description of how colleges and departments are involved in the selection of teaching staff, a description of institutional policies on staff development and promotion, and indicators used for monitoring the quality of staff management processes throughout the institution,

Description of process for preparation of report on this standard.

Report on subsections of the standard

Special Notes: Evidence to support conclusions should be clearly stated and discussed. This evidence should include specific Key Performance Indicators, including those identified by the NCAAA and others selected by the institution for its planning purposes. In each case the indicator should be stated and results achieved compared with what was planned for, and future performance targets set where appropriate. Evidence should include internal benchmarks (comparisons across the institution or over time) and external comparisons with other comparable institutions.

Policy and Administration

Recruitment

Personal and Career Development

Discipline, Complaints and Dispute Resolution

Overall Evaluation of Institutional Employment Processes. The report should refer to relevant evidence and benchmarks and include a summary comment indicating particular strengths, areas requiring improvement, and priorities for action.

10. Research (Overall Rating _____ Stars)

All staff teaching higher education programs must be involved in sufficient appropriate scholarly activities to ensure they remain up to date with developments in their field, and those developments should be reflected in their teaching. Staff teaching in post graduate programs or supervising higher degree research students must be actively involved in research in their field. Adequate facilities and equipment must be available to support the research activities of teaching staff and post graduate students to meet these requirements. In universities and other institutions with research responsibility, teaching staff must be encouraged to pursue research interests and to publish the results of that research. Their research contributions must be recognized and reflected in evaluation and promotion criteria. The research output of the institution must be monitored and benchmarked against that of other similar institutions. Clear and equitable policies must be established for ownership and commercialization of intellectual property.

Explanatory note describing the nature and extent of research involvement of the institution and of teaching staff within it. The explanation should include a brief description of organizational arrangements for developing and monitoring research activity across the institution including any research centers and activities to encourage research by individual staff members. Indicators used for monitoring research performance should be listed.

Description of process for preparation of report on this standard.

Report on subsections of the standard

Special Note: Evidence to support conclusions should be clearly stated and discussed. This evidence should include specific Key Performance Indicators, including those identified by the NCAA and others selected by the institution for its planning purposes. In each case the indicator should be stated and results achieved compared with what was planned for, and future performance targets set where appropriate. Evidence should include internal benchmarks (comparisons across the institution or over time) and external comparisons with other comparable institutions.

Institutional Research Policies

Faculty and Student Involvement in Research

Commercialization of Research

10.4 Facilities and Equipment

Overall Evaluation of Research Performance. For a university the report should include statistical data on the extent and quality of research activity including competitive grants, publications and citations and other relevant information benchmarked against appropriate institutional benchmarks. For a college this information can be included but the report must include data on professional or scholarly activities that ensure teaching staff are up to date with developments in their teaching field. The report should include summary comment indicating particular strengths, areas requiring improvement, and priorities for action.

11. Institutional Relationships with the Community (Overall Rating _____ Stars)

Contributing to the community must be recognized as an important institutional responsibility. Facilities and services are made available to assist with community developments, teaching and other staff must be encouraged to be involved in the community and information about the institution and its activities made known. Community perceptions of the institution must be monitored and appropriate strategies adopted to improve understanding and enhance its reputation.

Explanatory note about institutional policies for community service activities and media or other contacts to develop community understanding and support. The explanation should include information about how contributions to the community are recognized within the institution.

Description of process for preparation of report on this standard.

Report on subsections of the standard

Special Note:: Evidence to support conclusions should be clearly stated and discussed. This evidence should include specific Key Performance Indicators, including those identified by the NCAAA and others selected by the institution for its planning purposes. In each case the indicator should be stated and results achieved compared with what was planned for, and future performance targets set where appropriate. Evidence should include internal benchmarks (comparisons across the institution or over time) and external comparisons with other comparable institutions.

Institutional Policies on Community Relationships

Interactions with the Community

11.3 Institutional Reputation

Overall Evaluation of Institutional Relationships with the Community. The report should include relevant statistical and survey data and indicate particular strengths, areas requiring improvement, and priorities for action

I Independent Evaluations

Describe the process used to obtain independent comment on the self study. Processes may include a review of documentation by experienced and independent persons familiar with similar institutions and who could comment on relative standards, consultancy advice or a report by a review panel, or even the results of an accreditation review by an independent agency. An independent evaluation may be conducted in relation to the total self-study, or involve a number of separate comments by different people on different issues.

Summary of matters raised by independent evaluator(s)

Comment on matters raised by independent evaluator(s) (Agree, disagree, further consideration required, action proposed, etc.)

J Conclusions

1. List and briefly describe institutional activities that are particularly successful or that demonstrate high quality.

2. List and briefly describe institutional activities that are less than satisfactory and that need to be improved.

K Action Recommendations

These should be based on the matters identified earlier in the report for further improvements or to overcome problems or weaknesses identified indicate specific actions proposed to deal with the most important priorities for action identified in those sections. Matters of greatest urgency or highest priority should be identified. For each action proposed recommendations should be made on who should be responsible for the action, timelines specified, and any necessary resources required.

Action Recommendation 1

Person (s) responsible

Timelines (For total initiative and for major stages of development)
Resources Required
Action Recommendation 2.....
Person(s) responsible
Timelines
Resources Required
Action Recommendation 3.....
Person(s) responsible
Timelines
Resources Required
Action Recommendation 4.....
Person(s) responsible

Timelines
Resources Required
Continue for further action recommendations...

The Institutional Self Study Report should be on A4 paper, unbound, printed on one side, page numbered, and with a table of contents for easy reference.

Attachments

- Membership and terms of reference for sub-committees and working parties
- Reference list of key reports and other documents cited in the report
- Glossary of acronyms and abbreviations used in the report
- Copy of report(s) by independent evaluator(s)

In addition to the self-study report the following documents should be provided:

Self-evaluation Scales for Higher Education Institutions. The completed scales should include star ratings, independent comments and indications of priorities for improvement as requested in the document, and should be accompanied by a description of the processes used in investigating and making evaluations.

A copy of the institution's strategic plan

A copy of the institution's strategic plan for quality improvement (which may be included within the broader institutional strategic plan)

Current student catalogue, prospectus, bulletin or handbook including descriptions of the curriculum, admissions requirements, degree completion requirements, and related information

The following documents should be available for the review panel during the visit. Members of the panel may ask for some of it to be sent to them in advance.

Faculty handbook or similar document with information about staffing policies, professional development policies and procedures and related information

Administrative and financial policies manual or similar document including the institution's bylaws and regulations, roles and responsibilities of administrative and academic officers and major committees, and an explanation of the institutions governance and administrative structure.

Quality assurance manual or description of procedures including information about the institutions system of assessing programs and services, the role of the institution's quality center and systems for gathering and analyzing data on quality of performance and planning for improvement.

Current data on faculty and other teaching staff including tables with numbers by academic rank, by highest qualification, teaching staff/student ratios for each department and college, and for the institution as a whole For a university (optional for a college) information should be provided on research output for each department, college and for the institution as a whole. Current teaching staff CVs should be on file and available for the review panel if required.



**National Commission for Academic Accreditation
&
Assessment**

**Handbook for Quality Assurance
and
Accreditation in Saudi Arabia**

PART 3

**EXTERNAL REVIEWS FOR ACCREDITATION
AND
QUALITY ASSURANCE**

**EXTERNAL REVIEWS FOR ACCREDITATION
AND
QUALITY ASSURANCE**

National Commission for Academic Accreditation & Assessment

**Riyadh
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia**

January 2012

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INTRODUCTION

The National Commission for Academic Accreditation & Assessment has been established in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia with responsibility for determining standards and criteria for academic accreditation and assessment and for accrediting postsecondary institutions and the programs they offer. The Commission is committed to a strategy of encouraging, supporting and evaluating the quality assurance processes of postsecondary institutions to ensure that the quality of learning and management of institutions are equivalent to the highest international standards. These high standards and levels of achievement must be widely recognized both within the Kingdom and elsewhere in the world.

This handbook has been prepared to assist institutions in introducing and developing internal quality assurance processes and preparing for the external peer reviews that the Commission will conduct to verify the achievement of high standards of performance.

Part 1 of the handbook is intended to give a general overview of the system for quality assurance and accreditation. It describes the principles that underlie the approach taken by the Commission, summarizes standards that will be applied in quality assurance and accreditation judgments, and briefly outlines the stages involved in the approval of institutions and accreditation of programs. Part 1 of the handbook also includes an explanation of a number of terms used for the quality assurance and accreditation system in Saudi Arabia.

Part 2 of the handbook focuses on internal quality assurance processes. It provides advice on establishment of an institution's quality center, processes of planning, evaluation and internal reporting on educational programs, and self study and improvement of institutional activities. Templates for use in preparing reports are included in appendices.

Parts 3 of the handbook provides details of what is required in preparation for and conduct of external reviews. These processes relate to applications for approval and accreditation of a new institution, the accreditation and re-accreditation of programs and of institutions on a five year cycle.

Parts 1, 2 and 3 of the handbook should be read in conjunction with several other key documents, the *National Qualifications Framework* which sets out the learning expectations and credit requirements for levels of academic and technical awards and the two documents setting out standards for accreditation. The standards address the eleven areas of activity in higher education institutions. The primary standards documents for higher education are *Standards for Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education Institutions* and *Standards for Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Higher Education Programs*. Both of these are accompanied by companion documents that provide self-evaluation scales for assessment of performance in relation to the standards. A set of standards based on the general requirements for programs but with additional matters relevant to distance education has been prepared. These standards as well as some specific requirements developed by the Ministry of Higher Education must be met for programs offered by distance education, and an institution offering such programs must meet them for any of its programs delivered that way. Standards for technical training programs have also been developed and must be met in technical training programs offered in community colleges established by universities. The TVTC has developed standards and processes for the quality assessment and accreditation of programs in other public or private technical training institutes or colleges. Supplementary documents dealing with programs in some special fields of study are in preparation. These documents explain the standards expected by the Commission and are intended to serve as important guides for continuing improvements in quality.

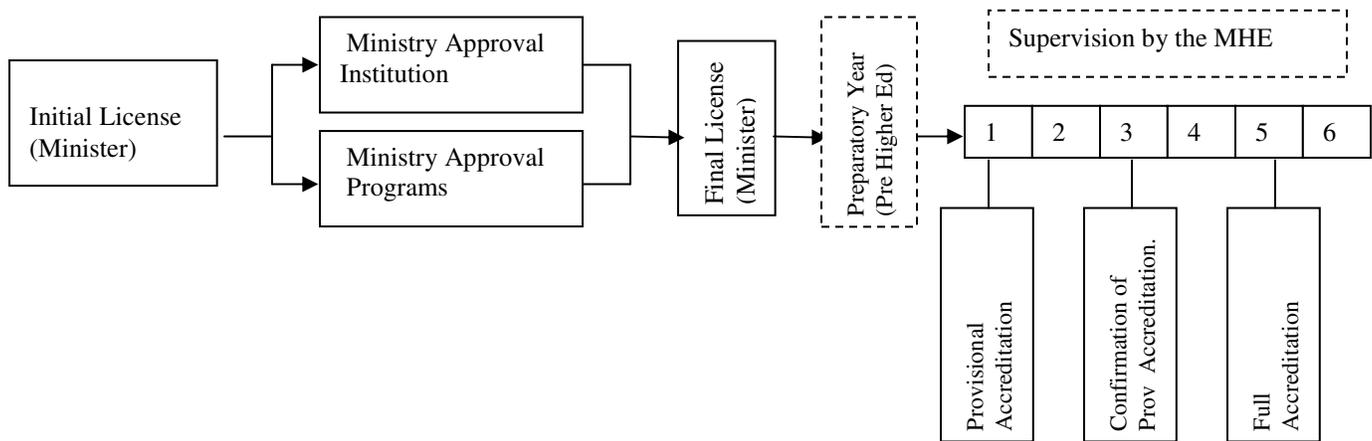
CHAPTER 1

APPLICATIONS FOR APPROVAL AND ACCREDITATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS AND PROGRAMS

1.1 Stages in Approval and Accreditation of a New Private Institution

The stages of approval and accreditation of a new private higher education institution are summarized below.

1. An application is made to the Ministry of Higher Education for an Initial License.
2. If the Initial License is granted the applicant develops detailed plans for the establishment of the institution and the programs to be offered. In developing these plans the applicant should pay careful attention to the requirements of both the Ministry of Higher Education for institutional and program approval and the National Commission for Academic Accreditation & Assessment (“the Commission”) standards and requirements for accreditation.
3. An application is made to the Ministry of Higher Education for approval to establish the institution and to offer its initial range of programs.
4. The Ministry of Higher Education advises the applicant if the institution and its programs are approved and the applicant can then proceed with acquiring facilities and equipment and planning for recruiting initial staff.
6. When all necessary requirements have been met, the Ministry of Higher Education issues a final license permitting the institution to offer specified degree programs.
7. The institution may introduce a preparatory year to ensure adequate background for students enrolling at the institution. If it is offered, a preparatory year is not part of the higher education program that follows and does not carry credit towards that program. It is “preparatory” and designed to ensure that students have the necessary skills to begin higher education studies in their chosen field. During the first year when higher education courses are offered, the Commission may assess the institution and its initial programs for provisional accreditation. If the institution’s activities and plans for further development meet all of its requirements, the Commission may grant provisional accreditation.
8. The institution must provide summary annual reports to the Ministry and to the Commission indicating implementation of its plans. Visits to the institution may be conducted to verify the accuracy of these reports and confirm scholarship eligibility.
9. In the third year of operations in an institution that has provisional accreditation, the Commission will conduct a formal site visit to review the quality of its activities and the quality of its programs. If all requirements are met the Commission will issue a confirmation of provisional accreditation and may recommend continuing scholarship eligibility.
10. In the year following that in which the first students have graduated, detailed self studies must be completed for the institution and its programs and the Commission will conduct independent external reviews for full accreditation of the institution and of the programs from which students have graduated.



11. After the institution and the programs it offers have been accredited, self studies and external reviews for re-accreditation will be required every five years. (The timing of these periodic reviews may be varied by the Commission).

12. Additional programs may be introduced at any time and may be granted provisional accreditation provided they are within the scope of programs approved by the Ministry of Higher Education and approved by the Ministry. These programs should be assessed for provisional accreditation by the Commission before they are offered or in the first year in which they are offered, and will be considered for full accreditation in the year following completion of the program by the first group of students.

Special Notes

13. It is essential that planning be done for the institution and for the initial programs in full compliance with the Saudi Arabian requirements. If assistance in planning is provided by another organization (either within Saudi Arabia or elsewhere), that organization should be fully briefed at the beginning about all the local requirements of both the Ministry of Higher Education (MHE) and the National Commission for Academic Accreditation & Assessment (NCAAA). Proposals that do not include all the information required by each of these organizations in the required format (for example, preparation of program and course specifications for programs to be offered) will not be considered by that organization.

14. An institution can only be considered for provisional or full accreditation if it has a final license that authorizes all the higher education award programs it offers. If an institution offers programs outside its approved scope of activities (e.g. programs in other fields of study, or postgraduate programs that have not been approved) neither the institution nor any of its programs can be considered. (Note that this does not prevent the institution from offering non credit community education programs that do not contribute credits towards a degree or an associate degree or diploma.)

15. It is important that the relationship between an institutional accreditation and a program accreditation be clearly understood.

In institutional accreditation the systems for overseeing the quality of ALL programs will be considered and this may involve a close examination of a sample of programs to assess the effectiveness of those institution-wide arrangements. Effective quality assurance processes must apply to all of an institution's programs including any offered through distance education, on remote campuses, and any that have been recently licensed by the MHE, even if this is through a separate licensing arrangement. If the institution offers a preparatory or foundation year or has established community colleges, the systems for oversight of the quality of these programs or colleges will be evaluated. (e.g., for programs in technical training)

In program accreditation, the specific program will be evaluated in detail and all the standards applicable to that program must be met. Although this evaluation will not focus on institutional matters, if there are institutional arrangements that affect the quality of the program, the impact of those arrangements will be assessed. For example, if institutional processes result in staffing being inadequate, learning resources being insufficient, or a serious lack of equipment or other resources, this may prevent the program being accredited even if those managing the program have no authority to solve the problem.

16. In an institution that has provisional accreditation, self studies for full accreditation should begin in the final year of the institution's first degree program in preparation for an assessment for accreditation. The external review for accreditation will take place in the following year when the first students have graduated. If full accreditation is not granted the consequences will depend on the seriousness of problems found. Further details of decisions that may be made and consequences of failure to gain accreditation are provided below.

17. An international institution or other organization wishing to establish an institution in Saudi Arabia, or to establish a branch campus linked to an institution based elsewhere will be treated as though it is a private institution and must follow the same processes, including an application for an initial license. However there are some special requirements associated with the relationship between the Saudi Arabian institution or campus and the parent institution in another country. These requirements are included in the general descriptions set out below and in Attachment 1 to Part 3 of this Handbook

1.2 Ministry of Higher Education and Commission Requirements at each Stage.

Details of requirements and processes for Ministry licensing and approvals should be obtained from the Ministry. The following information provides a brief summary.

1.2.1 Initial License

Requirements for an initial license for a private higher education college are set out in Articles 2 and 3 of the *Executive Rules and Technical Procedures for the Bylaws for the Private Colleges*.

These bylaws, rules and procedures set out requirements for the legal structure of the organization that will be responsible for founding the institution, and the documentation required in a proposal for an initial license. There are a number of specific requirements relating to the founders and their contributions to the venture, the mission and goals, title and location of the institution, and the departments and academic awards it proposes to offer, and the proposed date of commencement. Specific provisions must be made for financial guarantees to protect the interests of enrolled students, and an independent feasibility study must be provided.

The initial license is an authorization to begin detailed planning but does not give the right to do any more than that. A copy of the initial license must be provided at the next stage, the applications for general approval of the institution and its initial programs by the Ministry of Higher Education. A copy must also be provided when consideration for provisional accreditation is carried out by the Commission.

Requirements for private technical colleges and institutes may be obtained from the Technical and Vocational Training Corporation (TVTC).

1.2.2 Ministry Approval of a Private Institution and of its Programs

For private higher education colleges, the requirements of the Ministry of Higher Education are set out in Article 4 of the *Executive Rules and Administrative and Technical Procedures for the Bylaws for the Private Colleges*. These include a number of specific requirements for facilities and equipment, and for academic administration. Article 5 sets time limits for these arrangements to be completed.

(Applicants should be aware that although the Ministry of Higher Education has not repeated the details of its requirements for private colleges in its requirements for a private university, the Commission will expect those requirements to be satisfied in a proposal for a private university before it will give its provisional accreditation.)

Detailed plans for the establishment of the institution should be provided describing facilities, equipment, and operational procedures in sufficient detail to clearly indicate what will be done to meet the Ministry's requirements. The plans must include details of staged development of facilities, acquisition of equipment and appointment of staff to ensure that adequate provision is made at an initial stage before students are first admitted, and that further provision is made over the first five years as numbers increase and additional courses are offered.

The requirements of the Ministry of Higher Education for educational programs are set out in Article 6 of the *Executive Rules and Administrative and Technical Procedures for the By Laws of the Private Colleges*. They include a number of specific requirements relating to library provisions, equipment required to assist teaching processes, student records equipment, course and program details and provisions for academic staffing.

It is **STRONGLY RECOMMENDED** that as these plans are prepared, the requirements of the NCAA for institutional and program accreditation be considered at the same time. These will be required when the institution is assessed in its first year of operation and failure to plan for these from the beginning is likely to result in very substantial duplication of effort and additional cost.

The feasibility statement included with the application for an initial license should be updated with details of anticipated costs and other matters incorporating any amendments as a result of this detailed planning.

The plans prepared by the applicant are considered in detail by specialized committees established by the Ministry. The Ministry considers the advice of these committees and decides whether approval should be given. If the institution is approved, the Ministry will also specify the programs it is approved to offer, and the level (e.g. diploma, bachelor's, master's) at which this can be done.

For postsecondary institutions that will be responsible to other ministries or government agencies, details of requirements must be obtained from the ministry or agency concerned.

1.2.3 Final License

When the facilities, staffing and other matters required before the first students are admitted have been completed, the applicant should apply to the Ministry of Higher Education for a Final License. The Ministry will conduct a site visit and conduct further investigations to check that its requirements have been met.

The Ministry will require some additional information including financial guarantees as specified in Article 8 of the *Executive Rules and Administrative and Technical Procedures for the By Laws of the Private Colleges*.

If the Minister, after receiving this documentation, approves the application a Final License will be issued.

The institution may then admit its first students to programs that have been approved and proceed with its planned developments.

An institution must not admit students to any programs until a final license is issued. If students are admitted before this, the institution will be subject to strong disciplinary action and the general approval and provisional accreditation may be cancelled.

Unless special permission has been given by the Ministry, advertising of the institution or its programs is not permitted until a final license has been issued.

If after an institution commences and the Ministry's requirements are not met, action may be taken by the Ministry to enforce implementation of the plans or impose other sanctions.

Annual reports may also be required by the Ministry or other organization to which the institution is responsible.

1.2. 4 Commission Requirements for Provisional Accreditation of a New Institution

To meet the Commission's requirements for provisional accreditation, the applicant must submit plans and operational procedures in sufficient detail to indicate that its standards will be met. Details of documents that must be provided are included in Attachments 2, 3 and 4 of Part 3 of this Handbook.

The plans must include listings of internal policies, procedures and regulations that are to be prepared prior to admission of the first students (Stage 1 preparation), and a timeline for the preparation and implementation of any additional policies, procedures, or other arrangements relevant to the institution's quality assurance system.

The standards for higher education institutions are summarized in Part 1 of this Handbook and described in greater detail in the Commission's publication, *Standards for Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions*. (A companion document setting out self evaluation scales based on these standards is also available from the Commission).

The provisional accreditation of an institution indicates that after considering the plans the Commission believes that an institution will meet its standards and that it will have the capacity to offer educational programs in the proposed fields of study up to the levels specified in the proposal.

An application for provisional accreditation of a higher education institution must be accompanied by applications for provisional accreditation of programs to be offered in the first three years. Requirements and processes for the provisional accreditation of programs are set out in Section 1.2.5 below.

Processes Followed by the Commission

Members of staff of the Commission will be available to provide advice to the applicant on its requirements. However this advice will be without prejudice to a decision on the proposal, which will be made by the Commission after receiving independent advice from a review panel and its advisory committee.

When a proposal is received it will be checked by the Commission to ensure that necessary information has been included. Additional information or modifications may be requested.

The Commission will appoint an independent panel to evaluate the proposal in relation to the requirements referred to above, and provide a report on the proposal including advice on the extent to which the Commission's requirements for accreditation will be met when the plans set out in the proposal have been implemented. The review panel may request additional information on particular matters, may meet with designated representatives of the proposed institution, and may conduct site inspections.

The report of the review panel, together with the initial proposal, will be considered by the advisory committee. That committee will consider the proposal and the panel's report, and prepare advice for the Commission on whether provisional accreditation should be granted.

The proposal, the report of the review panel, and the advice of the committee will be provided to the Commission, which will decide on its response. The Commission may decide:

- (a) That provisional accreditation of the institution should be granted.
- (b) That the provisional accreditation of the institution should be deferred for up to one year so that additional required information can be provided or to remedy specific problems that have been identified. This alternative will be used if most but not all requirements have been met and the Commission believes there is a high probability that a subsequent submission could succeed.
- (c) That provisional accreditation should be denied.

If provisional accreditation is granted or deferred, the Commission may establish conditions that must be met.

1.2. 5 Commission Requirements for Provisional Accreditation of Programs in a New Institution

Proposals should be made for provisional accreditation of all programs that the proposed new institution wishes to offer during its first three years of operation.

The plans for the programs must be set out in program and course specifications in the format required by the Commission, with additional descriptions and program policies and processes as described in Attachment 4 to Part 3 of this Handbook.

The standards for accreditation of higher education programs are set out in *Standards for Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Higher Education Programs*. For the Commission to grant provisional accreditation of a program, it must be satisfied that if plans for the program are implemented as described it is likely that full accreditation will be granted once the first group of students has completed the program. Consequently these standards should be studied carefully, and additional explanatory information provided if thought to be necessary to explain fully what is intended.

Programs must comply with the *National Qualifications Framework* which sets out general requirements for credit hours and standards for learning outcomes at each qualification level. They must also meet more specific requirements for programs in various professional fields

Additional programs can be provisionally accredited at any time if they are within the fields of study and the levels for which an institution has a final license. (This should be done before students are admitted to the programs concerned.)

(Note that if an institution wishes to expand its scope of activities it is also possible for a final license to be modified to extend the institution's scope of operations and permit additional programs in other fields or at other levels. Such an extension must be approved by the Ministry of Higher Education in advance). See Section 1.4, **Changes in Scope of an Institution's Activities** below.

Proposals for provisional accreditation of a new program (and any additional programs proposed at a later time) should be submitted at least 9 months before the proposed first enrollment of students in the program.

Institutions responsible to Ministries or organizations other than the Ministry of Higher Education may also have to meet particular requirements established by them. Details of requirements should be obtained from the Ministry or organization concerned.

Processes Followed by the Commission

Members of staff of the Commission will be available to provide advice to the applicant on requirements for the program proposals if required. However, as for provisional accreditation of an institution, this advice will be without prejudice to final decisions on the proposals which will be made by the Commission.

When proposals are received they will be checked by the Commission to ensure that necessary information has been included. Additional information or modifications may be requested.

The Commission will appoint an independent panel or panels with expertise in the program areas concerned to evaluate the program proposals in relation to the requirements referred to above, and provide reports on the merits of the proposal and the extent to which those requirements are met. The review panels may request additional information on particular matters, may meet with designated representatives of the institution, and may conduct site inspections.

The reports of the review panels, together with the initial program proposals, will be considered by the Commission's relevant advisory committee. That committee will consider the proposals and the panel's reports, and prepare advice for the Commission on whether provisional accreditation of the programs should be granted.

After considering the panel reports and the advice of the advisory committee the Commission will decide on its response.

The Commission may decide for each program considered:

- (a) That the program should be provisionally accredited.
- (b) That the provisional accreditation be deferred for up to one year so that additional required information can be provided or to remedy specific problems that have been identified. This alternative will be used if most but not all requirements have been met and the Commission believes there is a high probability that a subsequent submission could succeed.
- (c) That the provisional accreditation be denied.

The Commission may establish conditions that must be met.

The provisional accreditation of a program will remain valid for a period until two years later than the time when the first group of students is expected to graduate. This time allowance is designed to allow for a self-study of the program and an external review by the Commission before a decision is made on whether the program should be fully accredited.

During the initial development period, that is until the institution and the initial programs have been fully accredited, summary annual reports describing action taken on implementation of the plans submitted for provisional accreditation must be submitted to the Commission which will monitor the implementation of planned activities and may visit the institution or examine relevant documents to check on progress. During its second year of operation the Commission will arrange an inspection to satisfy itself that the approved plans are being satisfactorily implemented and may issue a formal statement giving confirmation of the provisional accreditation.

1.2. 6 Full Accreditation of a New Institution

When the first group of students has graduated the institution should conduct a self-study following the processes outlined in Chapter 3 of Part 2 of this Handbook. This self study should commence during the year in which that first group of students is expected to complete their programs, and be finalized early in the following year when the results obtained by those students are known. In keeping with the principle that the institution should accept primary responsibility for quality, the report on this self-study is an important element in the institution's quality assurance procedures. However, it also provides important documentation for the external review conducted by the Commission before it considers whether full accreditation should be granted.

The Commission will not consider for accreditation any institution that is in breach of Ministry requirements, for example if it is offering programs beyond the scope of its license, or if it is using a title for the institution that misrepresents its license (e.g. representing itself as a university when it only has a license to operate as a college).

To carry out its external review the Commission will appoint an independent review panel to study documents prepared, visit the institution to inspect facilities and equipment, interview faculty, staff and students, and provide a report.

The standards that will be applied by the Commission are those set out in the *Standards for Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions*. To be accredited the institution must meet the requirements of the Ministry of Higher Education (or other ministry or organization to which the institution is responsible). Because of this, a report on the extent to which such requirements have been met should be attached to the self study report.

The preparations that are required by an institution before an external review of the institution takes place, and the actions taken by the Commission and the review panels it appoints, are the same as for later five yearly reviews. They are described in Chapters 2 and 3 of Part 3 of this Handbook.

The report of the review panel, together with the initial proposal, will be considered by the Commission's advisory committee. That committee will consider the proposal and the panel's report, and prepare advice for the Commission on whether provisional accreditation should be granted.

The self study report, the report of the review panel, and the advice of the committee will be provided to the Commission, which will decide on its response. The Commission may decide on one of the following alternatives:

- (a) That full accreditation should be granted.
- (b) That the provisional accreditation be extended for a specified period of time up to a maximum of two years to allow the institution to remedy specific problems that have been identified.
- (c) That the provisional accreditation be withdrawn.

If full accreditation is granted the Commission may establish conditions that must be met.

If provisional accreditation is extended, a further review will be conducted at the end of the period of extension to determine whether the problems have been resolved. If they have been resolved, full accreditation will be given. If they have not been resolved the provisional accreditation will be withdrawn.

If provisional approval is withdrawn, the Minister will be informed and action may be taken by the Ministry under Ministry regulations, including possible revocation of the institution's license and closure of the institution.

1.2. 7 Full Accreditation of a Program

The procedures outlined below refer to individual programs. However the Commission may consider closely related programs in similar fields at the same time, and in a small institution with only a few programs, may consider full accreditation of the institution and full accreditation of programs simultaneously.

Because of the close relationship between institutional activities and program functions that support programs and the quality of individual programs at an institution, accreditation of an institution is normally a prerequisite for full accreditation of a program. However as noted above it is possible for some programs to be considered for accreditation concurrently with an institutional accreditation evaluation.

A self-study of the program should be conducted following the processes outlined in Chapter 2 of Part 2 of this Handbook and a report prepared following the template for a periodic program self study in the attachment to that document. This self study should commence during the year in which the first group of students is expected to complete the program, and be finalized early in the following year when the results obtained by those students are known. The Commission will appoint an independent review panel to carry out the review and provide a report.

The standards that will be applied by the Commission are those set out in the *Standards for Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Higher Education Programs* and consistent with the requirements of the *National Qualifications Framework* and particular requirements for the field of study concerned. (While particular emphasis will be given to the standard for Quality of Learning and Teaching, the other standards must also be met).

The preparations that are required before an external review of a program takes place, and the actions taken by the Commission and the review panels it appoints are the same as for later five yearly reviews. They are described in Chapters 2 and 3 of this part of the Handbook.

The reports of the review panel, together with the program self study report, will be considered by the Commission's relevant advisory committee. That committee will consider the self study and review panel reports, and prepare advice for the Commission on whether full accreditation of the program should be granted.

The Commission may decide on one of the following alternatives:

- (a) That the program should be fully accredited.
- (b) That the provisional accreditation be extended for a specified period up to a maximum of two years to remedy specific problems that have been identified.
- (c) That the provisional accreditation be withdrawn.

If full accreditation is given the Commission may establish conditions that must be met.

If provisional accreditation is extended, a further review will be conducted at the end of the period of extension to determine whether the problems have been resolved. If they have been resolved, full accreditation will be given. If they have not been resolved, the provisional approval will be withdrawn.

If provisional accreditation is withdrawn, the Ministry will be notified and action will be taken under its regulations. This may include a requirement that the institution cease offering the program and make acceptable arrangements for the continuation of studies by students enrolled in the program at the time the decision is made.

1.2. 8 Re-accreditation of Institutions

After institutions have been given full accreditation they will be expected to complete a self-study within five years, and participate in an external peer review conducted by the Commission for re-accreditation every five years.

1.2. 9 Re-accreditation of Programs

After a program has been fully accredited further self-studies and external reviews by the Commission will be conducted for re-accreditation every five years.

The Commission may require earlier reviews of institutions or of programs if it believes they are needed.

1.2. 10 Ongoing Evaluations and Mid-cycle Reviews

It is expected that an institution, and each program within it, will monitor its quality of performance at least on an annual basis. The approach taken will vary according to differing circumstances but should include consideration of predetermined performance indicators, and also close attention to any matters identified for special attention in quality improvement strategies.

In addition to this annual monitoring which may be focused primarily on selected issues, there should be a more comprehensive overview of quality of performance part way through the formal self study and external review cycle. (e.g. every two or three years.) This should be based on the standards identified by the Commission and should identify any matters requiring attention. However, its purpose is for internal institutional monitoring and planning purposes and reports to an external body are not normally required.

1.3 Changes in Accredited Programs

It is expected that programs will be constantly monitored and that changes will be made as required in response to evaluations and to new developments in a field. However, if a major change is made, the basis for accreditation could be affected and the Commission should be notified at least one full semester in advance, so it can assess the impact of the change on the program's accreditation status.

A major change is one that significantly affects the learning outcomes, structure, organization or delivery of a program or the basis for its accreditation.

If a major change is made without the Commission being informed at least one full semester in advance, the accreditation of the program will lapse. The consequence is that the program is no longer accredited and must be re-submitted for accreditation.

Examples of major changes would be the addition or deletion of a major track within a program (e.g. accounting or international finance majors within a commerce or business degree), the addition or deletion of a core course of study (e.g. mathematics in an engineering degree), a change in title that implied a new or different field of study, re-orientation or development of a program to prepare students for a different occupation or profession, or a change in the title of a program or award that implied coverage of a different field of study or professional preparation, a change in the length of a program, or a new exit point within a longer program (e.g. the granting of a diploma within a bachelor degree program).

To enable the Commission to monitor developments in accredited programs, institutions are expected to provide brief annual reports on changes made, using the template provided for this purpose in Attachment 7.

1.4 Changes in Scope of Institution's Activities

It is possible for a license to be modified by the Ministry of Higher Education to extend the institution's scope of authorized activities and permit additional programs in other fields or at other levels. Detailed plans for the extension that demonstrate the institution's capacity to manage the extended range of activities are required. The Ministry's approval must be obtained—and the Minister must agree and approve a change to the institutions final license.

For its institutional accreditation to be extended to cover the increased scope of activities the proposed change must be submitted to the Commission for its agreement and the Commission may conduct a review to check that its quality assurance requirements will continue to be met.

1.5 Proposals for Approval and Accreditation of New Private Universities

Proposals for new private universities will be considered following the same steps as other private institutions. A private university must meet the same general standards as other higher education institutions as outlined in the *Standards for Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions* and the requirements of the Ministry of Higher Education. However there are also additional requirements for a university. These include Ministry requirements that require programs in at least three colleges and Commission requirements for accreditation as a university relating to range of fields of study, level of programs, involvement in research, faculty participation in scholarly activity, and size of institution sufficient to sustain the more extensive range of activities.

The additional accreditation requirements for a university established by the Commission are described in 2.4 of Part 1 of the Handbook.

In setting these accreditation requirements, the Commission recognizes that the standards may take some time to achieve—for recently established and new public universities. Consequently there will be special transition arrangements for these institutions. They are intended to provide an appropriate balance between ensuring that necessary standards are met, and giving a new institution a reasonable opportunity to develop over time.

1.6 Institutions Based in Other Countries Wishing to Operate in Saudi Arabia

1.6.1 General Considerations

The educational opportunities made available when an institution that is based elsewhere and wishes to provide post-secondary programs in Saudi Arabia are welcomed.

However, it is necessary for those institutions and the programs they offer to comply with the rules and regulations applicable to other institutions in Saudi Arabia. This is not a reflection on the quality of any international institution in its own territory, but a general requirement of all providers that they comply with Saudi Arabian quality provisions for the delivery of programs in the country.

There are several different ways in which external institutions may operate in Saudi Arabia.

(a) A course or program developed in another country may be offered by a Saudi Arabian institution under licensing, franchising or other contractual arrangements. Such a program must be accredited by the proper authority in the country of origin, or if the international institution is established in a country that does not have an accreditation system, evidence that the program is recognized as meeting international standards must be provided.

In this situation the Saudi Arabian institution must meet all requirements for institutional approval, accreditation and licensing, with a final license that includes authority to offer a program in the field and at the level concerned. In addition, the program must be accredited in Saudi Arabia by the Commission following the procedures for

provisional and full program accreditation and re-accreditation. In considering the program for accreditation the Commission will take account of quality assurance and accreditation considerations that may have been undertaken elsewhere, but the program must meet all local accreditation requirements including consistency with the *National Qualifications Framework*.

(b) An international institution may establish an organization in Saudi Arabia for the purpose of operating a branch campus or campuses. An institution seeking a license under this arrangement must be accredited by the proper authority in the country of origin, or if the international institution is established in a country that does not have an accreditation system, evidence that it is recognized as meeting international standards must be provided.

In this situation the organization established in Saudi Arabia must meet all the requirements for a private institution set out in the *Executive Rules and Administrative and Technical Procedures for the Bylaws for the Private Colleges* as well as the requirements of the Commission for institutional approval.

Programs to be offered must be accredited in Saudi Arabia by the Commission following the procedures for provisional and full program accreditation and re-accreditation. In considering the programs for accreditation, the Commission will take account of quality assurance and accreditation considerations that may have been undertaken elsewhere, but the program must meet all local accreditation requirements including consistency with the *National Qualifications Framework*.

If the international institution is a university in its own country, the title of the university may be used in the title of the local campus. However, unless the local campus meets all of the standards required for universities in Saudi Arabia, the term College must be used within its title. (e.g., Riyadh College of University XXX). The expectations for research involvement and scholarship of faculty, for the nature and levels of programs to be offered, including facilities for faculty research as set out in the *Standards for Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions*, must be met.

1.6.2 Stages of Approval and Accreditation for an International Institution

Where a Saudi Arabian institution wishes to offer the program of an international institution that falls within the limits of its license, the program should be submitted to the Commission for provisional accreditation in the same way as required for a local private postsecondary institution.

Where a Saudi Arabian institution wishes to offer the program of an international institution that falls outside the limits of its license, it must apply for a change to its institutional approval, and its license, under the procedures described above for private institutions. The particular program to be offered must also be accredited by the Commission.

If an international institution wishes to establish a branch campus in Saudi Arabia, it must follow the same procedures as those outlined above for a local private institution; that is, an application for an initial license; an application for institutional approval; and an application for program accreditation. If those applications are approved the institution will be given provisional approval, its programs will be given provisional accreditation, and a license will be issued so it can commence operating. The institution will be monitored as arrangements are completed and programs established, after which it will be evaluated by the Commission for full approval and accreditation. Programs will then be re-accredited and an institutional review conducted on a five-yearly cycle.

1.6.3 Changes in Programs and Scope of an International Institution's Activities

As for private institutions, minor changes in programs in response to evaluations and changes in circumstances are expected and should be made routinely to ensure that they remain up to date. However, if major changes are proposed (see section 1.3 in this Handbook and the definition of a major change in Handbook 1), the Commission must be notified at least one full semester in advance, and if the Commission believes the change would affect the program's accreditation status it must be approved by the Commission or the accreditation will lapse.

If an international institution operating in Saudi Arabia wishes to introduce a program that would fall outside the scope of its license to offer programs in Saudi Arabia it must apply to the Ministry of Higher Education and to the Commission for its institutional approval and its license to be modified in the same way as for a private institution. The new program would have to be provisionally accredited by the Commission before it could be offered.

1.7 Stages of Approval and Accreditation for New Public Institutions

When a completely new public institution is established, plans for an effective quality assurance system should be included in its general plans for establishment. The plans should meet the same requirements as a private institution for institutional and program accreditation and the steps will be the same as those described above for private institutions. The initial accreditation judgments by the Commission will be provisional and the development of its plans will be monitored by the Commission. A subsequent review will be conducted for full accreditation as for private institutions.

When a new public institution is formed by the merger of two or more existing public institutions or colleges of existing institutions, the new institution should as soon as practicable establish quality assurance arrangements for the combined institution. It should then conduct the necessary self-studies and apply to the Commission for accreditation of the institution and its programs. Depending on the extent of development of its quality assurance systems this may lead to either full or provisional accreditation.

The Commission may determine that:

(i) With respect to the institution:

- (a)** That new institution meets quality assurance requirements and should receive full accreditation.
- (b)** That the new institution does not fully meet quality assurance standards but has appropriate plans for development of quality assurance arrangements and should receive provisional approval.
- (c)** That the new institution does not yet have adequate plans for the development of quality assurance arrangements and should meet specified requirements before applying again for accreditation. The institution would be requested to provide detailed plans for development to the Commission within a specified time period up to a maximum of six months.

(ii) With respect to each of its programs:

- (a)** That the program meets quality assurance requirements and should be fully accredited.
- (b)** That the program does not fully meet quality assurance requirements but has appropriate plans for development and should receive provisional accreditation.
- (c)** That the program does not yet have adequate plans for development of quality assurance arrangements and should meet specified requirements before applying again for accreditation. The institution would be requested to provide detailed plans for development to the Commission within a specified time period up to a maximum of six months.
- (d)** That there are serious deficiencies in the program and the concerns should be referred to the Ministry of Higher Education with a recommendation that the program be cancelled until those deficiencies are remedied.

1.8 Stages in Accreditation for Existing Institutions

1.8.1 General Considerations

Following an initial self evaluation, strategic plans should be developed for the introduction of required quality assurance processes, and to deal with any weaknesses or problems found. These plans should provide for the progressive implementation of processes and improvements until quality assurance and accreditation requirements are met.

When its quality systems have been established, the institution should undertake a further self evaluation and if it believes standards are being met, it should apply to the Commission for accreditation. This should be done a

minimum of 12 months and preferably 18 months in advance of an anticipated time for an accreditation review. The Commission will conduct an initial visit and check on eligibility requirements, after which a decision will be made on a date for a review to be conducted. The sequence of activities for a review is described in Chapter 2. . The Commission will develop a schedule for external reviews to be carried out during the transition period as the new system is introduced.

1.8.2 Schedule for Institutional and Program Accreditation for Existing Institutions

The sequence of activities for approval and accreditation may vary slightly, but as far as possible the following steps will be taken so that the institutional and program reviews can be coordinated:

A schedule of institutional and program reviews will be developed by the Commission in consultation with institutions, taking into account the time when the institutions believe their internal quality systems will be in place and requirements for coordinating the involvement of external review teams.

The scheduling of external reviews for institutions will vary according to circumstances. For example in a small institution with programs in only one or two fields, the institutional and program reviews may be combined and carried out concurrently. In a large institution the institutional review will normally be carried out first, and followed at a later time by program reviews in which programs in closely related fields of study may be carried out concurrently.

The Commission may also schedule program reviews in specific areas of study at different institutions at about the same time to facilitate the involvement of international peer reviewers with expertise in those fields.

Processes for the conduct of external reviews and finalization of review reports are described in later chapters of this part of this Handbook.

CHAPTER 2

PLANNING AND CONDUCT OF EXTERNAL REVIEWS

2.1 Eligibility for Accreditation Review

Accreditation reviews may occur at several stages for both institutional and program assessments.

- Before, or shortly after an institution begins to operate or a program is introduced. These reviews lead to provisional accreditation.
- As soon as the first group of students has graduated (from the institution or from the program from which students have graduated). These reviews lead to full accreditation.
- After the institution or program has been accredited, further reviews for accreditation will occur on a five year cycle.

The main purposes of the accreditation processes are to promote quality improvement and to provide assurance to the institution and the students and wider community that good standards are being achieved. The objective is to recognize good quality, not to “fail” institutions or programs that may be having difficulties. Consequently before an accreditation review process begins there is a preliminary check to make sure that necessary processes and other requirements are in place. The review after that will make a judgment about the quality of what is done.

The preliminary check will determine eligibility for a review to take place. For a new or recently established institution the eligibility check will be largely based on plans for development, combined with some information about initial activities. The eligibility checks for a program will similarly be largely based on plans, and if the program has already been introduced on preliminary evaluative data that is available.

For institutions or programs that are fully established, that is those from which initial students have already graduated, more complete information must be available about the existence and effectiveness of a substantial number of processes and outcomes.

Details of these eligibility requirements are included in Attachment 5.

2.2 Activities Prior to a Review for Provisional Accreditation

The process for provisional accreditation of an institution involves an analysis of the institution’s plans for development and of the programs it plans to offer during its first few years. This can be done in advance before the first students are admitted which gives those responsible for establishing the institution and its first student’s greater confidence that it will meet requirements for accreditation. However it can also be done at a slightly later stage when it has started its teaching programs. In the latter case, the assessment will involve a combination of what has already been done, and what is proposed.

In either case continuation of provisional accreditation and eventual full accreditation will require monitoring of implementation as time goes on to ensure that the plans are being implemented as planned.

After provisional accreditation has been granted, the institution submits brief annual reports indicating action taken to continue implementation of its plans, the institution is visited by the NCAAA again in its third year after which (if implementation is proceeding satisfactorily) the provisional accreditation is confirmed. The institution begins preparations for a full accreditation evaluation during its fourth year, and its assessment for full accreditation occurs in the year following the graduation of its first group of students (normally in its fifth year).

Before this process begins the NCAAA must be satisfied that certain requirements for provisional accreditation are met. These requirements relate to core elements in the NCAAA’s standards for quality assurance and accreditation, and (for a private institution) to compliance with the terms and conditions of its final license.

The details of requirements are shown in Attachments 1, 2 and 3 of this Handbook. An application for consideration for provisional accreditation of an institution should be made at least two semesters in advance of the planned time for a review and in the case of a new institution this application should be accompanied by applications for provisional accreditation of programs to be offered by the institution during its first three years.

2.3 Activities Prior to a Review for Full Accreditation

Eighteen Months Prior to a Proposed Review

The institution may initiate a request for a review at a time to suit its planning arrangements.

Nine Months Prior to a Review

The Commission finalizes a schedule of reviews and notifies institutions of planned dates.

The Commission nominates a member of staff as a liaison officer to facilitate conduct of the review and the liaison officer meets with the institution to discuss arrangements and timelines. This representative of the Commission will be available during the period of preparation to provide advice and assistance.

The institution completes a self-study and prepares other required documentation.

The institution nominates a senior contact person to liaise with the Commission about arrangements for the review.

The Commission commences planning for the appointment of a chair and members of the review panel.

The Commission estimates costs for the visit and notifies the institution of the fee for the review and the estimated costs. Payment should be made within one month of this notification.

Four Months Prior to a Review

The Commission finalizes appointment of the chair and members of the review panel.

The Institution provides copies of the self-study report, the institution or program profile and other required documentation in electronic and hard copy form to the Commission.

The chair of the review panel may visit the Commission and the institution for consultations about the review process.

Three Months Prior to a Review

The Commission arranges travel to Saudi Arabia for review panel members from outside the country and makes accommodation arrangements.

The staff member of the Commission facilitating the review sends to the members of the panel:

- Copies of the institutional or program self-study report, completed self evaluation scales and a list of other documents received from the institution;
- Summary information about postsecondary education in Saudi Arabia, the approach taken to accreditation and quality assurance, and a draft program for the visit to the institution. Reference is given to documents included on the Commission's web site.
- The chair of the review panel consults with panel members about the review process and their particular roles within it, about issues arising from their initial review of the material, and may contact the Commission to obtain additional information or material if required.

One Month Prior to the Review

The chair of the review panel informs the Commission of any variations the panel would like in the draft visit program (see draft for different types of review below) and any additional material from the institution it would like to have available prior to the review.

The member of staff of the Commission who is facilitating the review consults with the institution to finalize the visit program including the schedule for the visit to the institution, meeting and interview rooms and arrangements for nominating participants in interview sessions. Arrangements are also made for provision of any additional information sought by the review panel.

Arrangements for accommodation, local transport and other matters as required for members of the review panel are finalized by the staff member of the Commission and the person appointed by the institution to manage internal arrangements for the review. These arrangements include provision of interpreting and translating services during the review if required. Arrangements are made at the institution for meeting room(s), work areas, equipment and other requirements.

The staff member of the Commission sends to the members of the panel an itinerary for the visit including final details of travel arrangements, accommodation, and a finalized visit program; and a template for the panel to use in preparing its draft report on the visit.

Immediately Before the Review

The institution is responsible for ensuring that the panel members arriving by air are met at the airport and escorted to their hotel.

2.4 Activities During a Review

An external review may take three to five days depending on the size and complexity of the institution, whether programs and the institutional review are conducted concurrently, and the number of programs considered.

The person appointed by the institution to manage institutional arrangements should be available on a full time basis during the review, with other technical and support people being available as required. If program reviews are being conducted concurrently with an institutional review, an additional person should be appointed for each program. If the reviews are being conducted in separate male and female sections, these staff should be available in each section.

The person appointed as an institutional liaison during the review has very important responsibilities. That person should meet with the liaison officer of the Commission prior to the review to ensure full understanding of what is needed. He or she should meet the panel when it arrives and ensure that necessary arrangements are made and followed. In an institution that operates with separate campuses or sections for male and female students, institutional liaisons should be nominated who can assist with arrangements on each campus.

During the visit the person nominated as a liaison should escort the panel to meetings and introduce members as appropriate. In public meetings the liaison should remain, but in meetings with staff or students should leave after the introductions and return when the meeting concludes. In meetings to review material and documents the person appointed to assist should leave to permit the panel to review materials and discuss matters in confidence. However, the panel chair may request the person to remain and assist.

If the panel requires additional material, or wishes to meet with others for discussion, the person acting as liaison should make the necessary arrangements.

During the review the panel undertakes a series of visits and meetings in the institution to review activities. The panel may break into sub groups from time to time to see different things, and will meet together periodically to review progress and compare notes.

At the end of the visit the panel will spend approximately one day preparing a draft report which is given to the Commission Liaison Officer. The panel then meets with the Rector or Dean and other senior faculty for an exit meeting in which the general conclusions of the review are explained.

Sample schedules are provided in Chapter 3 of Part 3 of this handbook for an institutional review, a program review, and a review in which programs and an institution are considered concurrently. These are for illustrative purposes only. A detailed schedule will be developed for each review taking account of the particular circumstances at the institution concerned.

2.5 Activities After a Review

One Month After the Review

The draft review report given to the Commission Liaison Officer is edited for consistency and to eliminate inadvertent errors, and put into a form suitable for release. The revised draft is sent to the chair of the panel for a final check, and then sent to the institution with an invitation to identify any factual errors that might have occurred.

Evaluation questionnaires are sent by the Commission to the panel members and to the institution inviting comments on the value and effectiveness of the review process.

Two Months After the Review

Within two weeks of receiving the draft report the institution has the opportunity to respond to the Commission indicating any factual errors it believes may have been made. The staff member of the Commission consults with the chair of the panel about the response and any possible adjustments that may be needed in the report. The chair may consult with members of the panel about implications of the changes.

Three Months After a Review

The final report is sent to the institution which is asked for its response to recommendations for action that were included in the report. These responses should be made in brief summary form. The institution is not required to accept every recommendation but is expected to take them all seriously and if not accepted or an issue that has been identified is responded to in a different way reasons, should be given. The institution's response to the recommendations will be considered when decisions are made on whether the institution or program should be accredited.

The report is considered by the Commission's Accreditation Review Committee which may provide comment and advice on the report for consideration by the Commission in making its decision on accreditation. This Committee does not make separate judgments on whether an institution or program should be accredited, but is asked to provide advice on the equivalence of standards applied by different review panels to try to ensure that some external review panels are not tougher or easier than others.

Four Months (approximate date) After a Review

The report and its recommendations are considered by the Commission, together with the response of the institution to the recommendations and any comments or advice from the Accreditation Review Committee. The Commission decides on accreditation after considering the report and this advice.

The final report is sent to the institution together with details of the decision on accreditation.

Two weeks after the report and the decision are sent to the institution, the report is included on the Commission's web-site.

If the report has identified processes or activities in the institution that it believes are commendable and that should be made known to other institutions through the Commission's good practice web-site, they may include on its website a description of those practices in appropriate form.

The institution is asked for its response to recommendations for action that were included in the report. This response is expected within three months of the request being made, but the time line for action will depend on the matters raised and the institution's plans for response.

Later Action

The timeline for later action will depend on action required and time scale for response.

At a time specified by the Commission, the institution provides a report on action taken in relation to recommendations made by the panel and its plans for response. The Commission may review action taken and will include an addendum to the report on the website indicating what has been done in response to the review recommendations.

2.6 Preparations by an Institution for an Institutional Review

External reviews of institutions will consider the performance of the institution in achieving its mission driven aims and objectives, and the extent to which it is meeting the standards described in the *Standards for Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education Institutions*:

- A. Mission and objectives
- B. Governance and Administration
- C. Management of Quality Assurance and Improvement
- D. Learning and Teaching
- E. Student Administration and Support Services
- F. Learning Resources
- G. Facilities and Equipment
- H. Financial Planning and Management
- I. Employment Processes
- J. Research
- K. Institutional Relationships With the Community

In considering these matters the reviewers will pay particular attention to the institution's self-study report and an important outcome of the review will be to verify the conclusions of that self-study, although the review panel will also make its own independent assessment of the standards achieved.

The review may also deal with matters identified as priorities by the Commission or the relevant Ministry as important general policy initiatives, and to any areas of weakness or difficulty identified in previous internal or external reports at the institution.

Processes and requirements for completion of an institutional self-study are included in Part 2 of this Handbook and a template for presentation of a self-study report is included in Attachment 2 to that document,

As soon as possible after dates have been set for external reviews to be undertaken the institution should plan for completion of the self-study and prepare for other documents and activities that will be required.

The self study should be completed in time for the report to be sent to the Commission **four months** before the external review is to take place.

The self-study report should include a detailed institutional profile, descriptions of processes followed in conducting the self-study and an analysis of the institutions performance in relation to the eleven standards identified by the Commission.

An institutional profile section of the report should include the following material:

- a) A brief summary of the institution's history, scale and range of activities;
- b) A description of the management and organizational structure using an organizational chart, a list of colleges and departments, and the names and contact details of key individuals;
- c) A list of campus locations indicating programs offered and student numbers;
- d) Faculty, staff and student numbers in total and by college, department, and program;

- e) Summary information about the institution's accreditation status including the outcomes of any previous institutional reviews, and any conditions that were established;
- f) A description of the institution's quality assurance arrangements, priorities for development, and any special issues affecting its operations; and
- g) A list of matters that are of particular interest to the institution and on which the institution is seeking comment and advice in the review.

The body of the report should include descriptions and evidence of performance relating to each of the Commission's standards. This evidence should include specific data about quality of performance based on clearly defined performance indicators and other information as appropriate, together with comparative information for other relevant institutions selected by the institution for performance benchmarking. The report should include hard data and quantitative information wherever possible.

The report should draw on information provided in the Commission's self-evaluation scales and a copy of the completed scales should be provided in a separate document. However the self-evaluation scales do not constitute the self-study and should be made available for reference in a single separate document.

Six copies of the institutions self-study report should be provided to the Commission four months prior to the date of the review. These should be on A4 paper, unbound, printed on one side, page numbered, and with a table of contents for easy reference. A list of acronyms used in the report should be included as an attachment.

In addition six copies of the report should be provided in electronic form on CDs.

Because of the extensive involvement of international reviewers the self-study report should be provided in English unless otherwise agreed in advance by the Commission. Other documents could be available in English or Arabic.

In addition to the self-study report the following documents should be provided:

(a) To be sent in advance to external reviewers.

- (i) Self-evaluation Scales for Higher Education Institutions. The completed scales should include star ratings, independent comments and indications of priorities for improvement as requested in the document, and should be accompanied by a description of the processes used in investigating and making evaluations.
- (ii) A copy of the institution's strategic plan.
- (iii) A copy of the institutions strategic plan for quality improvement (which may be included within the broader institutional strategic plan)
- (iv) A current student catalogue, prospectus, bulletin or handbook that includes descriptions of the curriculum, admissions requirements, degree completion requirements, and related information.

(b) To be available for review panels during the site visit. Reviewers may request that some of this material be sent in advance, and may ask for additional material during the visit.

- (v) Faculty handbook or similar document with information about staffing policies, professional development policies and procedures and related information
- (vi) Administrative and financial policies manual or similar document including the institution's bylaws and regulations, roles and responsibilities of administrative and academic officers and major committees, and an explanation of the institutions governance and administrative structure.

- (vii) Quality assurance manual or description of procedures including information about the institutions system of assessing programs and services, the role of the institution's quality center and systems for gathering and analyzing data on quality of performance and planning for improvement.
- (viii) Current data on faculty and other teaching staff including tables with numbers by academic rank, by highest qualification, teaching staff/student ratios for each department and college, and for the institution as a whole. For a university (optional for a college) information should be provided on research output for each department, college and for the institution as a whole. CVs of current teaching staff should be on file and available for the review panel if required.

Preliminary discussions should be held with the Commission Liaison Officer nominated to facilitate the review to confirm dates, arrange for provision of documents, plan organizational arrangements, and other matters described in preparations for a review.

2.7 Preparations by an Institution for an External Program Review

Program reviews will consider the quality of a program in relation its achievement of its aims and objectives and its performance in relation to the eleven standards described in *Standards for Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Higher Education Programs*. Particular attention will be given to the standard for Learning and Teaching including evidence about achievement of intended learning outcomes and consistency with the requirements of the *National Qualifications Framework*. In a professional program attention will be given to the requirements for employment in the field concerned and the processes used to assess the extent to which those requirements have been met.

The document that will be the main focus of attention will be the program self study report which should be a complete separate document based on the template for a periodic program self study provided in the attachment to Part 2 of this handbook. An important outcome of the review will be to verify the conclusions of that self-study. However the review panel will also make its own independent assessment of the standards achieved.

The review may also deal with matters identified as priorities by the Commission or the relevant Ministry as important general policy initiatives, and to any areas of weakness or difficulty identified in previous internal or external reports at the institution.

As soon as possible after dates have been set for external review, plans should be made for completion of the program self study and preparation of other documents required.

1. The program self-study should be completed in time for the report to be sent to the Commission **four months** before the external review is to take place.

The report should include descriptions and evidence of performance relating to each of the Commission's standards. This evidence should include specific data about quality of performance based on clearly defined performance indicators and other information as appropriate, together with comparative information for other programs within the institution and in other institutions for benchmarking. The report should include quantitative data as much as possible.

The report should draw on information provided in the Commission's self-evaluation scales and a copy of completed scales should be provided in a separate document. However, the self-evaluation scales do not constitute the self-study report which should be provided as a single separate document.

Five copies of the program self-study report should be provided to the Commission **four months** prior to the date of the review. These should be on A4 paper, unbound, printed on one side, page numbered, and with a table of contents for easy reference. A list of acronyms used in the report should be included as an attachment. Five copies of the report should be provided in electronic form on CDs.

Because of the extensive involvement of international reviewers, the self-study report should be provided in English unless otherwise agreed in advance by the Commission. Other documents could be available in English or Arabic.

2. In addition to the self-study report, the following documents should be provided in hard copy and desirably in electronic format as well.

(a) To be sent in advance to external reviewers.

- (i) Completed scales from the *Self-Evaluation Scales for Higher Education Programs*. The completed scales should include star ratings, independent comments, and indications of priorities for improvement as requested in the document and should be accompanied by a description of the processes used in investigating and making evaluations.
- (ii) The program specification including the matters described in Chapter 2 of Part 2 of this handbook.
- (iii) An annual program report for the most recent year
- (iv) A brief summary of the outcomes of previous accreditation processes (if any) including program accreditations and any special issues or recommendations emerging from them.
- (v) A copy of the program description from the bulletin or handbook including descriptions of courses, program requirements and regulations

(b) To be available for the review panel during the site visit: (Members of the panel may ask for some items to be sent to them in advance, and ask for additional material)

- (vi) Course specifications for courses in the program and annual course and program reports.
- (vii) Faculty handbook or similar document with information about faculty and staffing policies, professional development policies and procedures and related information.
- (viii) CVs for faculty and staff teaching in the program and a listing of courses for which they are responsible. This information should include the highest qualification (and if appropriate other qualifications and experience relevant to their teaching responsibilities)
- (ix) Copies of survey responses from students and other sources of information about quality such as employers, other faculty, etc.
- (x) Statistical data summarizing responses to these surveys for several years to indicate trends in evaluations.
- (xi) Statistical data on employment of graduates from the program.
- (xii) Representative samples of student work and assessments of that work.

Preliminary discussions should be held with the Commission Liaison Officer nominated to facilitate the review to confirm dates, arrange for provision of documents, plan organizational arrangements, and other matters described in preparations for a review.

A person at the institution will need to be nominated as liaison to coordinate preparations and assist the panel during the review. That person should meet with the nominated Commission Liaison Officer prior to the review to ensure full understanding of what is needed. He or she should meet the panel when it arrives at the institution and ensure that necessary arrangements are made and followed. If a program is offered on separate campuses for male and female students institutional guides should be nominated who can assist with arrangements on each campus.

During the visit the person nominated as a liaison should escort the panel to meetings and introduce members as appropriate. In public meetings the liaison should remain, but in meetings with staff or students should normally leave after the introductions and return when the meeting concludes. In meetings to review material and documents the liaison would normally leave to permit the panel to review materials and discuss matters in confidence. However the panel may request the person to remain and assist.

If the panel requires additional material, or wishes to meet with others for discussion, the person acting as guide should make the necessary arrangements.

Documentation Required if Institutional and Program Reviews are conducted Concurrently

If the two types of review are conducted concurrently the self-studies and related material for both are required.

Requirements for Assistance, Facilities, and Equipment For an External Review

1. Staff Assistance

- One person should be available on a full time basis to manage arrangements and coordinate activities during the review.
- If program reviews are being conducted concurrently with an institutional review, the person managing institutional arrangements should provide overall coordination and additional persons should be available for each program review. (If program reviews are in closely related areas within a college or department one person may be able to provide support for several of these reviews. However if programs are in different fields a person is required for each.)
- If there are separate sections of an institution for male and female students or if a program being reviewed is offered in male and female sections, a person is required (for the institutional review and for each program) to assist in each section.
- Technical assistance should be provided for computing and other equipment.
- Transport should be provided from and to the airport, and between the reviewers' hotel and the institution.

2. Facilities

- A meeting room accessible to male and female staff for use by the review
- A work room for the review panel to examine reference material provided by the institution and prepare and discuss draft reports.
- Meeting and interview rooms accommodating up to 10 people for meetings with members of faculty, staff and students.
- For an institutional review these facilities should be centrally located. For program reviews it is desirable that facilities be in or close to the department offering the program. For concurrent reviews of an institution and one or more programs work spaces should be available both centrally and within the department(s) concerned.
- If programs are offered on sections for male and female students, meeting and interview facilities should be available in both sections.

3. Equipment

- Computers with printing and internet facilities for each member of the review panel (s).
- Photocopier and associated stationary supplies.

4. Reference Material

- Paper copies of all documents provided for the review.

- Any other relevant reference material including such things as handbooks, policy documents, reports, samples of students work and assessment tasks, faculty research reports, etc,
- Tea and coffee provisions in each location.

2.8 Preparations by the Commission for an External Review

The main processes are the same for institutional and program reviews although the composition of the review panels and the schedule of activities during the review itself will differ.

1. As soon as it has determined its schedule of external reviews the Commission will notify institutions of the dates. This will be done at least nine months in advance of the reviews. The Commission will notify the institution of its expected costs of the review. Payment will be required within one month of this notification.

2. The Commission will nominate a liaison officer to be the main contact for matters involved in the organization and conduct of each review. This person will have responsibility for consultations with the institution and facilitating the review. The initial task will be to hold a meeting with representatives of the institution to review procedures and requirements, and establish a time line submission of documents and conduct of the review.

The liaison will maintain contact with the institution and provide or arrange for advice and assistance as required.

3. A review panel will be selected by the Commission drawing on a register of trained and experienced reviewers from within Saudi Arabia and outside, ensuring appropriate expertise within the group and avoiding any real or apparent conflict of interest. (See note on conflict of interest below) A person experienced in quality reviews and with experience relevant to the review to be undertaken will be appointed by the Commission to serve as the chairperson of the review team. The selection of a panel and a panel chair will be at the discretion of the Commission, but the Commission will take into account any matters raised by the institution about the composition of the panel.

Review panels will normally consist of three to five people depending on the size and complexity of the review.

The process of selection of review panel members will commence nine months prior to the review and be completed four months prior to the review.

4. Four months prior to the review the Commission:

- Finalizes the appointment of the chair and members of the review panel;
- Checks the documentation provided by the institution;

5. Three months prior to the review the Commission:

- Arranges for travel and accommodation for the review panel as required;
- Sends to the chair and members of the review panel the self study report, institutional or program profile and a list of other material provided by the institution, and for members from outside the country, documents describing the process of accreditation and quality assurance in Saudi Arabia.

6. One month prior to the review the staff member of the Commission:

- Finalizes travel and accommodation arrangements for the review panel;
- Finalizes the visit program to the institution in consultation with the chair of the review panel and the representative of the institution;
- Sends to the review panel and the institution a final itinerary;

- Sends to the members of the review panel a template for use in preparing the report on the review.
- Arranges for interpreting and translating services if required during the review.

7. Immediately prior to the review the staff member of the Commission:

- Meets the chair and members of the review panel at their hotel to provide a final briefing and discuss details of the review;
- Accompanies the panel to the institution and participates in the initial social function and first meeting with the Rector or Dean.

The Commission Liaison Officer will normally remain with the panel and provide assistance during the review. At the end of the review that staff member will meet with the panel for its final meeting at the hotel, receive a copy of the draft report and accompany the panel in its exit meetings at the institution.

CHAPTER 3

CONDUCT OF AN EXTERNAL REVIEW

An indicative outline of activities that might be undertaken in a review visit is provided below. This may be varied to suit particular requirements, and the provision of papers and supplementary information enables the panel to indicate any variations in the visit program they believe are needed. The panel chair should notify the nominated officer at the Commission of any variations requested at least three weeks prior to the visit, so the institution can be informed and any necessary changes in the program made by the institution.

An institutional review would normally take between three and five days depending on the size and complexity of the institution or the program concerned. A program review may take less time unless a number of programs are to be considered concurrently.

This sequence of activities is for illustrative purposes only. Details will be varied to meet differing circumstances.

3.1 Summary of Activities

The review process assumes that panel members have read and understood the documents describing the particular emphases and processes involved in the system of quality assurance and accreditation in Saudi Arabia. They will have studied the documents provided by the institution taking the emphases and processes of the Saudi Arabian system into account and will have formed preliminary views that will be reviewed through discussions and observations during the visit.

3.1.1 Preliminary Meeting(s)

At the beginning of the review, the chair and the Commission staff person assigned to the review will hold a half-day orientation and planning meeting with the panel members. This meeting will review arrangements for the visit and ensure understanding of cultural issues relevant to Saudi Arabian institutions and with which international visitors may be unfamiliar.

3.1.2 Informal Social Function

Whenever possible a social function should be held just prior to or at the beginning of the review at which members of the review team can meet informally with members of the quality committee and senior faculty. This is intended to assist in establishing a collegial and supportive relationship rather than an inspectorial one. The function should be informal, with brief introductory comments by the Rector or Dean or another senior member of faculty, and the chair of the review panel, to help establish a constructive and supportive tone for the review.

3.1.3 First Working Session

The first working session should begin with a meeting with the Rector or Dean, or in the case of a program review, an appropriate senior academic administrator who could be the Rector or Dean for an institutional review, or an Academic Vice Rector or Dean of the College and Head of Department for a program review. At this meeting the panel would be welcomed and an opportunity provided to discuss and clarify any issues relating to the review.

3.1.4 Review Activities

The panel will go together or may divide into sub-groups for visits and discussions with academic and administrative units within the institution. The selection and order of visits will vary according to the focus and priorities of the review, but should always include meetings with faculty and students, and a tour of facilities relevant to the review such as the library /resource center, a sample of computing and laboratory facilities, and for an institutional review, facilities for student recreation and cultural activities, and classrooms.

When considering particular functions or facilities attention should be given to the relevant sections of the *Standards for Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions* and *Standards for Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Higher Education Programs*. Judgments of adequacy should take into account the scale and stage of development of the institution, and its priorities for development as reflected in its mission statement, its self-study report and other relevant documents.

Opportunities should be taken for both planned interviews and informal conversations with faculty and students during the visits, and at least one meeting should be held with a representative group of students.

At an early stage during the review members of the review panel should meet with representatives of the quality committee to discuss its work and the priorities and strategies of the institution for quality improvement.

Provision should be made for the panel to meet periodically during the visit to review progress and identify any further matters requiring attention.

3.1.5 Concluding Activities in the Review

The review panel should meet to agree on its views and recommendations and prepare a draft report. Summary notes on particular matters should be prepared by members of the panel assigned to investigate those issues, and discussed and agreed by the panel. During this discussion every effort should be made to reach consensus. However if there are strongly held differing views, these should be accurately reflected in the written comments and the report. The statements and conclusions should clearly specify the evidence on which the comments are based.

A final meeting should be held with the Rector or Dean (for an institutional review) or academic vice rector and college dean (for a program review) at which the chair of the review panel outlines the major conclusions of the review. At the discretion of the Rector or Dean other senior faculty and academic administrators might be included in this meeting. An additional brief meeting might be held at which other senior faculty and academic administrators can be briefed on the outcomes of the review.

3.2 Sample Review Programs

Individual review schedules will differ depending on the number of panel members, the size of the institution, the number of programs, the location of the institution, and the arrival times of the panel members. The following sample schedules will serve as guides to an institutional review, a program review, and a combined review. Position titles used in these samples are for illustrative purposes. It is expected that institutions will use a variety of titles and have differing administrative arrangements for many of the functions concerned.

3.2.1 Illustrative Schedule for an Institutional Review (5 Days)

Arrival **Panel members arrive late afternoon or evening and check into their hotel.**

Day 1

8:30 am	Panel meets for an orientation and planning session to discuss the review and the assignment of roles and responsibilities to members. Meeting is led by chair of the panel and the Commission staff person. A brief tour of the campus may be arranged.
11:30 am	In institutions or programs offered in different sections for male and female students, senior staff provide a briefing on arrangements for coordination and interactions between these sections.
12:30	Informal lunch at the institution hosted by the Rector or Dean, and including senior faculty and members of the quality committee. Welcome given by the Rector or Dean and response from chair of the panel.
2:00 pm	Orientation session at the institution with the Rector or Dean—for an introduction to the institution, its mission and goals and objectives, and an overview of its strategic plans.

- 2:45 pm Panel meets with the Academic Vice Rector, a representative group of deans and heads of departments, and the head of the quality center. Overview of program development and evaluation processes and general information on academic performance of the institution. Discussion of section of self study report dealing with Standard 4, Learning and Teaching.
- 4:15 pm Brief tour of campus.
- 5:00 pm Panel departs for the hotel.
- 7:00 pm Panel meets at the hotel to debrief and have dinner.

Day 2

- 8:30 am Panel arrives at the institution and meets briefly.
- 9:00 am Meeting with Rector, Vice Rectors, Head of women's section. Overview of administrative arrangements, Discussion of Standard 2 report.
- 10:00 am Meetings with heads of departments and equivalent for male and female sections. (Selected sample of departments across institution. –if program reviews are being conducted simultaneously with the institutional review, these should be from different departments)
- 11:15 am Meetings with two representative groups of 8 to 10 undergraduate students at different levels drawn from departments across the institution.
- 12:30 pm Working Lunch
- 1:30 pm Panel tours the library/information resource center and meets with the head librarian. Discussion of library systems and support services and report on Standard 6.
- 2:30 pm Panel sub-divides:

Group A meets with director of admissions and reviews admissions standards and processes and with the registrar and reviews student record keeping functions and sample student transcripts and files.
Group B meets with the director of student services and reviews student activities, advising, counseling, and other student support services and extracurricular activities.
- 4:00 pm Panel reconvenes in the meeting room.
- 5:00 pm Panel departs for the hotel.
- 7:00 pm Panel meets to debrief and have dinner.

Day 3

- 8:30 am Panel arrives at the institution and meets briefly.
- 9:00 am Panel meets with dean or vice rector responsible for research development and representative group of deans and heads of departments. Discussion of research performance and research development strategies, and self study report on Standard 10
- 10:15 am Panel sub divides. Group A tours IT support services and computer labs and meets with the head of information technology.
Group B meets with the director and with representative faculty teaching in the English language and foundation programs.

- 11:30 am Meetings with representative groups of 5 to 8 faculty and teaching staff drawn from across the institution. (If there are concurrent program reviews these would be drawn from other departments)
- 12:30pm Working Lunch
- 1:30 pm Panel Sub-divides. Group A meets with senior financial managers for briefing on financial management and budgeting.
Group B meets with senior managers responsible for facilities and equipment for briefing on capital planning, maintenance, equipment policies etc.
- 2:30 pm Panel meets with senior managers responsible for employment and staffing policies for briefing on faculty employment and professional development policies. Panel reviews a representative selection of faculty qualifications and contracts in faculty personnel files.
- 3:30 pm Visits to selected facilities as requested by the Panel.
- 5:00 pm Return to hotel
- 7:00 pm Panel meets to debrief on day's activities and have dinner.

Day 4

- 8:30 am Panel arrives at the institution and meets briefly.
- 9:00 am Meeting with members of the institutions council for discussion of functions and activities of the Council.
- 10:00 am Panel meets with representative groups of 8 to 10 recent graduates from different programs in the institution.
- 11:15 am Panel meets with group of employers of graduates from the institution.
- 12:30 pm Working Lunch. Informal discussion with Academic Vice Rector and Director of Quality Center for follow up on questions raised during the visit.
- 1:30 pm Panel meeting
- 2:15 pm Members of panel may visit particular facilities or academic or administrative units to follow up on issues or questions raised or commence drafting sections of report.
- 5:00 pm Panel departs for the hotel.
- 7:00 pm Panel meets to debrief on the day's activities. The chair clarifies assignments and responsibilities in drafting the report. The panel has dinner at the hotel.

Day 5

- 8:30 am Panel meets to discuss possible conclusions and recommendations and to draft designated sections of the report.
- 9:30 am Panel members draft sections of report.
- 11:00 am Target time for completion of draft of sections of report. Panel meets to review draft recommendations and suggestions.
- 12:30 Panel breaks for lunch at the hotel.

- 2:00 pm Exit meeting of Chair of the Panel with Rector/Dean.
- 3:30 pm (Optional Meeting) Panel Chair presents main conclusions to meeting of senior faculty, staff and students.

3.2.2 Illustrative Schedule for a Program Review (4 Days)

Arrival Panel members arrive in the late afternoon or evening and check into the hotel.

Day 1

- 8:30 am Panel meets for orientation and planning session to discuss the review and the assignment of roles and responsibilities to members. Meeting is led by the chair of the panel and the Commission staff person.
- 11:00 am Initial meeting with the Academic Vice Rector or Dean and Head of Department—for an introduction to the institution, and the program and its goals, objectives and recent developments.
- 11:45 am For programs offered in different sections for male and female students, senior staff provide a briefing on arrangements for coordination and interactions between these sections.
- 12:30 pm Informal lunch at the institution hosted by the Academic Vice Rector or Dean, and including senior faculty associated with the program and members of the program self study committee. Welcome given by the Vice Rector or Dean and response from chair of the panel.
- 2:00 pm In the case of a review of one program, the panel meets with the appropriate dean, department head, and/or program coordinator for an overview of the program. If multiple programs are being reviewed, the panel may sub-divide for these meetings. Discussions include description by program coordinator of strategies used to coordinate planning and delivery to achieve the range of learning outcomes in courses offered, successes and difficulties encountered, and program evaluation and improvement strategies. Program coordinator describes main elements of program and course specifications and makes specifications and reports available for review. Panel members pursue questions arising from these descriptions and from their analysis of the self study report.
- 3:45 pm Tour of facilities for the program (e.g. classrooms, laboratories, computing facilities etc.)
- 5:00 pm Panel departs for the hotel.
- 7:00 pm Panel meets at the hotel to debrief and have dinner.

Day 2

- 8:30 am Panel meets with head of department for briefing on research and professional development activities, community service activities. Panel may review faculty resumes and research reports.
- 10:00 am Panel meets with faculty members who teach in the program(s) and with the coordinator of any internships or post-graduate studies that may be associated with the program. In the case of multiple programs or a larger number of faculty members, the panel may subdivide.
- 11:30 pm Panel meets with a representative group of 8-12 current students from different levels within the program.
- 12:30 pm Panel has lunch with a small group of faculty and administrators of the program(s).
- 1:30 pm Panel meeting.

- 2:00 pm Visit to library/learning resource center used for the program to review resources available and receive briefing on systems for program and student support.
- 3:30 pm Panel meets with the program coordinator to review examples of students work on tests or assignments and discuss strategies for verifying standards of student achievement.
- 5:00 pm Panel leaves the institution for the hotel.
- 7:00 pm Panel meets to discuss possible suggestions and recommendations and plan for preparation of report. Dinner at the hotel.

Day 3

- 8:30 am Panel meets with a representative group of graduates of the program(s).
- 10:00 am Panel meets with a representative group of employers of graduates.
- 11:30 am Planning meeting. Initial consideration of conclusions and recommendations, and identification of any matters requiring further investigation
- 12:30 pm Working Lunch.
- 2:00 pm Follow up visits and consultations as required. Initial preparation of sections of draft report.
- 5:00 pm Return to hotel.
- 7:30 pm Panel breaks for dinner at the hotel.

Day 4

- 8:30 am Panel meets to review draft suggestions and recommendations.
- 9:30 am Panel members continue with drafting of report. Additional consultations or visits to facilities or review materials arranged if required.
- 11:30 am Target time for completion of sections of draft report. Report consolidated and reviewed by panel chair.
- 12:30 pm Lunch.
- 1:30 pm Exit meeting with Dean/Head of Department/ Academic Vice Rector.
- 2:30 pm (Optional Meeting) Panel Chair presents main conclusions to meeting of senior faculty, staff and students.

3.2.3 Combined Institutional and Program Review

For smaller institutions or institutions that have one or two programs areas, such as business and IT for example, it will be possible to review both the institution and its programs at the same time. The panel will include experts in institutional and academic administration as well as experts in the individual discipline areas under review. It will also be possible in some larger institutions to conduct institutional reviews and some program reviews simultaneously. Arrangements will differ in different circumstances and details will be worked out on a case-by-case basis. In general however the two types of review will be separate rather than combined exercises, though provision will be made for consultation and exchanges Of information between the review teams at stages during the program.

CHAPTER 4

ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF EXTERNAL REVIEW PANELS

4.1 Qualities Required in External Reviewers.

The value of an external review will depend to a considerable extent on the credibility of the panel, and this will be affected by perceptions of their independence, their expertise in quality assurance processes generally and their familiarity with the focus of the review.

Members of the panel should have substantial senior experience in teaching and/or administration in postsecondary education relevant to the institution or program under review. They should also have the personal qualities of sensitivity, objectivity, and integrity to merit the trust and confidence of the institution, the Commission, and the wider community. Members from within Saudi Arabia should have completed a program of training in the processes of quality assurance, and those from elsewhere will also have significant training and experience in the field. Those from outside the country will receive a thorough briefing on local policies and conventions relevant to the review before it commences.

It is unlikely that any one person will have extensive knowledge of all matters that need to be reviewed, but the selection of a team should ensure that within the panel as a whole the required expertise is available.

Depending on requirements for expertise in particular reviews panels, may include experienced senior academic administrators, experienced faculty in the field of study concerned, experts in quality assurance processes, and/or experienced members of a profession for which students are being prepared.

4.1.1 Personal Qualities

- Ability to work effectively and collaboratively in a team situation;
- Ability to listen, and to communicate effectively in consultations with faculty, staff and students within an institution;
- Commitment to quality, combined with openness to alternative approaches that meet quality criteria;
- Sensitivity to local culture and traditions, and ability to reconcile these with generally accepted quality benchmarks;
- High standards of ethical behavior in dealing with sensitive or confidential matters.
- Reliability in meeting commitments.
- Ability to support opinions by relevant evidence and to modify opinions in the light of further information.

4.1.2 Academic and Professional Expertise

- Recent successful academic experience including teaching in one or more fields of study under review;
- Successful experience in a senior academic position;
- Experience in postsecondary education quality reviews;
- Recent experience in managing quality assurance processes in an educational environment;
- Recent senior experience in research or professional practice in a relevant field combined with recent direct academic activity;
- Demonstrated expertise in the analysis and interpretation of data in forming and validating conclusions;
- Ability to understand and evaluate information provided informally through consultations as well as in formal reports in a way that is sensitive to the particular context, to form hypotheses about underlying issues, and to investigate and form conclusions based on evidence obtained.

Prior to their appointment, members of the review panel will be asked to sign a form declaring that they do not have a conflict of interest, and making a formal commitment to maintain the confidentiality of the proceedings after the review is completed.

4.2 Responsibilities of Review Panel Members

Responsibilities of panel members include actions before, during and after the review.

4.2.1 Before the Review

Panel members should familiarize themselves with the standards and requirements for quality assurance and accreditation as specified in the documents provided by the NCAAA. This is essential because the judgment about accreditation is to be based on performance in relation to the Commission's standards.

- When material about the institution or program is received it should be read thoroughly so that the institution's mission, policies and procedures, and its quality assurance mechanisms are thoroughly understood. The reports should provide evidence of quality of performance which the panel has responsibility to verify.
- After reading this material panel members will normally be requested to identify matters that they believe should be investigated in detail as a result of the material studied. Brief written comments about these matters and possible questions that might be asked should be provided to the chair of the review panel and to the nominated officer at the Commission by the date specified.
- Panel members will normally be asked to investigate particular issues in depth during their initial preparation and during the review itself as well as contributing to the overall evaluations as a member of a review panel.
- Panel members may request that additional information or documents be provided or ask that additional evidence relating to the institution's self study conclusions be provided.
- Panel members should prepare possible questions to ask students, staff or administrators in investigating these issues should be prepared in advance, and sources of evidence to supplement what has already been provided should be identified if necessary.

4.2.2 During the Review

Descriptive information about processes followed in the institution and the institution's evaluations of those processes and outcomes should have been provided in documents sent in advance to the panel. Meetings and consultations should focus on verification of conclusions reached, or investigation of issues identified in preliminary analyses for more detailed investigation.

Panel members should communicate genuine interest and understanding, and contribute to the panel's full understanding of the institution's activities.

The review process will involve a number of scheduled meetings with staff and students and others associated with the institution. During these meetings members of the panel will ask questions to investigate matters arising from their initial reading of the material provided.

Panel members should take part in all aspects of the review. It is essential that members follow the guidance of the chair and adhere to agendas and timelines prepared for the various activities.

Arrangements may be made for follow up discussions by individual members of the panel to investigate particular issues in greater depth or to give further consideration to matters raised in later discussions. Where follow up on particular matters is required this should be arranged through the panel chair with the person nominated by the institution to assist with arrangements. It should not be done independently.

Notes should be prepared by each panel member on matters he or she has been given responsibility for investigating. It is important that these notes include summaries of relevant evidence as well as any tentative conclusions formed.

Where a panel divides into sub-groups members may be asked to prepare summary notes for the information of others who are involved in different activities.

The review schedule provides times for the review panel to meet at stages during the review. Full advantage should be taken of these times to discuss and reach preliminary conclusions, or to identify additional investigations that need to be undertaken.

During the review and at its conclusion members should assist by drafting assigned sections of the panel report. Conclusions about commendations, suggestions and recommendations should be discussed and agreed by the panel as a whole.

4.2.3 After the Review

On request members of a panel may provide comments to the Commission on the review process or on aspects of the institution's reports and activities that might be helpful in improving quality assurance arrangements.

Matters discussed or reported on in the review should not be discussed with persons other than the panel chair or other members, or the Commission. All such matters should be kept strictly confidential. Information about the review will not normally be provided other than by the Commission, or under special circumstances with the specific approval of the Commission, by the panel chair. Notes made and material provided during the review should be kept strictly confidential. Notes should be destroyed when no longer required and other documents either returned to the institution or destroyed.

4.3 Responsibilities of the Chair of a Review Panel

The chair has major responsibilities in leading the group investigation and coordinating its activities, in establishing a climate of cooperation and support in what is potentially a sensitive activity, and in coordinating the drafting of the report.

- When the review panel is first formed the person nominated as chair may be asked to consider material supplied by the Commission and the institution, and advise the nominated officer at the Commission of any special requirements for the arrangements and scheduling of the review activities.
- If circumstances permit the chair may participate with the Commission officer in preliminary discussions with the institution about arrangements for the visit.
- The chair should consult in advance (normally by email) with the members of the review panel to identify matters that they believe after reading the material supplied will need to be given particular attention during the site visit, to work out particular responsibilities for team members during the visit, and to formulate key questions that might be asked during the review. For example, panel members may be asked to give particular attention to performance in relation to several of the Commission's standards, to prepare key questions, and at a later stage to prepare initial drafts for the report commenting on those standards and possible commendations suggestions or recommendations.

These assignments may be reviewed when the review panel meets at the start of the site visit and the comments modified as necessary during the visit under the leadership of the chair in keeping with the opinions of the group as a whole.

- During initial meetings at the institution the chair should act as spokesperson for the group (though this responsibility may be shared with the nominated officer from the Commission). In doing this it is vitally important that a collegial and supportive climate be established, in which staff and students at the institution and panel members believe they can communicate openly and constructively about matters that may emerge.

- During meetings and in organization of other activities the chair should provide effective leadership, ensuring that meetings proceed in a constructive manner, remain on schedule, and that members can participate effectively in the discussions. The time schedule for meetings is a very important issue. The chair should insist that all meetings commence and conclude on time. If additional time is needed to deal with issues that emerge arrangements may be made for follow up discussions with one or more members of the panel.
- At the conclusion of the visit the chair should ensure that the views of all the panel members are expressed, supported by appropriate evidence, and that notes on those views are provided to assist in the preparation of the report.
- In the exit meeting with the Rector or Dean, or other senior faculty, the main conclusions reached should be outlined by the chair in a constructive manner, with acknowledgement and thanks for the assistance provided in the review. Advice should be given that a draft of the report will be made available for checking on factual accuracy.
- At the end of the review the report should be given to the Commission Liaison Officer.

After the report has been sent to the institution and a response received, the Commission may seek comment on possible editorial changes, and if an issue arises about the accuracy of data included or adequacy of evidence to support conclusions, further advice and comment may be sought.

It should be understood that although the review panel is providing expert advice on the review, that advice is given to the Commission, and the final report that is made public is the report of the Commission. Consequently although the Commission will normally follow the advice that it has received, it is not bound to do so in all respects, and may seek further advice on particular matters if it believes it is necessary to do so.

4.4 Avoidance of Conflict of Interest

All members should be independent of the institution being reviewed, with no personal, professional or commercial relationships that could lead to a conflict of interest, or even the perception of such a conflict.

A person should not serve on a review panel if he or she has personal or business connections with the institution under review, or with any of its students, senior staff or governing board.

A person should not become involved in consultancy work or related activities for any institution which they have reviewed for at least 12 months after completion of a review without first obtaining specific approval from the NCAAA.

When first approached about participating in a review the panel member will be asked to indicate any potential conflict of interest or prior association that could, or could reasonably appear to influence judgments made. These would include any contractual or personal relationships with the institution or its staff or students, any family or tribal relationship, any past dispute with the institution or senior staff, any close personal friendships, or any anticipated future personal commercial or educational relationship. They will be asked to sign a document certifying that they have no conflict of interest with the institution under review. If the member has any doubts about whether any past or possible future relationship would be considered a conflict of interest details should be provided to the Commission for consideration.

As a general rule the Board will avoid including a member of staff of a private institution on the review panel for another private institution offering similar programs in the same geographical area.

4.5 Verifying Conclusions in an Institution's Self Study

It is the job of the institution to provide programs and services that meet the required standards, and to establish mechanisms to check that it has done so. It is the panel member's job to independently verify that these processes have been effective. This means that they need to look closely at the processes followed, though they can be selective in what they follow up in detail.

Time in the institution is limited, so it cannot be expected that they will check everything. They must prioritize, and focus on areas where they have concerns. How can these areas be identified?

The starting point is the institutional self study or the program self study and program specification, and recent program reports produced by the institution. These documents should be evaluative, not merely descriptive. They should be read carefully, and decisions made about which aspects of them are most and least convincing. Supporting documents should be referred to, such as the course specifications and reports, administrative regulations and reports, data on indicators, survey results and so on. The panel member's job is to test, and if possible verify what the institution says about itself. Members are likely to focus on selected high priority items, and aspects they find least convincing, but not to the exclusion of other matters – they need to take a balanced view.

Testing and verifying can involve simply seeing for oneself – for example if there is a question about the adequacy of the library holdings or laboratory equipment. But where a more qualitative judgment is involved, it will be necessary to explore the perceptions of different people about the matter.

For example, a head of a department may be clear about the intended outcomes of a program. But does the person who is teaching a course that is part of that program understand those aims, and how their own course contributes to meet them? Find out by asking members of the teaching staff. Do students have a clear picture of what skills and abilities they are intended to develop? Do they think the teaching helps them develop those skills? Ask them!

An application for a new program has to be treated differently from an application for re-accreditation. For a new program the judgment has to be whether it is likely the program will achieve the necessary standards, not whether it is doing so. This means that it will be necessary to rely heavily on the plans set out in the application.

For re-accreditation, or for a new or extended program where a similar program is already operating, a lot of information can be gained from observations and discussions with staff and students, and this can be considered as well as the information in the institution's self assessment report and application.

4.5.1 Using the Criteria

This section suggests some lines of enquiry that might be taken in relation to some of the standards. They are examples rather than a complete list, and included here to suggest a style of approach. Judgment about the particular situation combined with experience elsewhere will indicate what needs to be looked at and what should be asked. The examples are prompts, based on the experience of people who have carried out many similar reviews.

4.5.2 Learning Outcomes

These should be set out clearly in the documents from the institution and cover the different types of learning described in the *National Qualifications Framework*. If they are not, some fundamental questions should be asked about whether the institution knows what it is doing. The statements of learning outcomes can be compared with the appropriate level of the *National Qualifications Framework*, and the panel member's knowledge of the specialist field should give the background to consider if they are adequate in relation to future employment.

As suggested above, in the re-accreditation or extension of a program teaching staff and students can be asked if they have a clear understanding of what a program is trying to achieve. Teaching staff can be asked what feedback is available from graduates or opinions of employers and how they use that feedback in reviewing the program.

The teaching strategies proposed for use in developing different kinds of learning outcomes should be clearly described in the documents from the institution. Knowledge of the subject field can help to assess whether the strategies are likely to be effective in promoting the learning necessary for students to achieve the intended outcomes. All of the outcomes should be supported by the curriculum and the level of demand should be progressively greater on the student at successive stages in the program.

Ask teaching staff how they see their teaching fitting in to the overall plan for the program, not just in terms of the knowledge acquired, but also in the development of capacity for thinking and increasing levels of personal skill and capacity for independent learning. Students can be asked what it feels like to be following the curriculum. Does it meet their expectations?

4.5.3 Assessment

Does assessment cover the full range of learning outcomes? Does it test skills and ability to apply knowledge, or just recall of information? It should be possible to match the outcomes to the assessment tasks described in the documents that have been received. If that cannot be done, there are fundamental questions to ask about whether the institution can be confident that its students have met or will meet the standards required for the award of the degree or other qualification.

Is assessment appropriate? For example, to assess whether a student has mastered a practical skill, he or she should be asked to demonstrate it, not just write about it.

Are there safeguards against cheating or plagiarism? Is there some form of independent verification of results? The answers should be in the documents, but if they are not, it will be necessary to ask the teaching staff.

Are there clear criteria to distinguish between grades? Students can be asked if they understand what they have to do to get the highest grade. Teaching staff can be asked if there are explicit criteria for them to use when they are marking. What mechanisms are there for verifying standards? There should be some way of checking the standards at this institution with those achieved elsewhere.

Do students get helpful feedback? Ask them! It might be helpful to ask to see some student work that has been marked, and to form a view on whether the feedback given was fair and helpful.

Student views are very helpful in considering an application for re-accreditation. What does it feel like to be a student on this program? Are the teachers friendly, helpful and available to answer questions? What are classes like – interesting and informative, or dull and confusing? Do they feel the teaching is helping them to achieve the outcomes of the program?

Teaching staff can be asked how they adjust and vary their teaching styles to respond to the needs of students. Have they received any training in teaching techniques, or other pedagogical matters? Have they used those teaching strategies? How did the students react? Are the methods appropriate for developing skills and applying knowledge, or just transferring information? Are the planned strategies set out in the course specification actually used?

A panel member can ask to see some learning materials, and use specialist knowledge to consider whether they will be effective.

For re-accreditation, the documents should contain statistics on progression and completion rates. If these suggest high rates of drop out or failure, faculty should be asked for comments on the reasons for this. Has enough care been taken to select students who are well matched to the demands of the course? Have the reasons for drop out been analyzed?

Ask students about the support and guidance that they receive and whether they think it could be improved. They could be asked whether the question has been asked by the institution, and if so, what has been the response.

4.5.4 Learning Resources

The quantitative assessment of the adequacy of resources is relatively straightforward. However volumes of collections don't mean much unless they are appropriate for the approach to teaching and learning. To establish whether the program is of high quality, it is important to consider how effectively the resources are used. For example, there is little point in having an excellent library if it is closed when students want to use it, or if they are not expected to seek information from a range of sources beyond a single textbook. How often do students use the library for independent study or for investigations they choose to undertake themselves?

4.6 Techniques for Information Gathering by a Review Panel

Members of a review panel need to consider both quantitative and qualitative data in verifying conclusions of self-study reports, finding strengths and weaknesses that and selecting matters about which improvements should be recommended. A number of techniques can be used.

4.6.1 Interviews

Much of the information needed will come from interviews in which clarifications are being sought, explanations obtained, and related information gathered that could indicate opportunities for improvement. Particular features of interviews may include:

- Clarification of any ambiguous data or conflicting claims, including conflicts between what may have been written and what individuals may have said.
- Checking on points that may be either the views on one or two individuals or generally held opinions within the institution.
- Constructive discussion about the interpretation of data and its implications.
- Checking that all relevant data has been seen rather than partial data that might give a superficial and mistaken impression.

In conducting interviews it is important to listen carefully and make notes on what has been said, and to concentrate on major rather than minor or insignificant issues. Making suggestions and proposals is not the role of the interviewers and should normally be avoided other than in response to a specific request or as a mechanism to find out more information.

Offering advice based on practice at the interviewer's own institution may be counterproductive if it creates an impression that the interviewer is making comparisons with his or her own institution rather than looking objectively at what is being done at the institution under review. Any relevant suggestions based on other experience can be included in a report if the panel as a whole believes them to be relevant

In addition to sampling of issues by the review panel it is also important in individual or group interviews to provide opportunities for staff or students to raise matters they believe should be considered. Although it may not be possible in the time available to explore such issues in as much depth as might be desirable, the opportunity to raise such matters and have them considered is an important element in the review process.

4.6.2 Obtaining Evidence from Different Perspectives

A further technique that can be used effectively, particularly in relation to matters where direct evidence is difficult to obtain and interpretations must be made, is to use triangulation. This involves seeking related information of different kinds and considering the consistency or inconsistency of conclusions reached. An example might be to compare perceptions of senior administration, staff, students, and external stakeholders on particular matters, together with statistical data from different sources. If similar conclusions are reached from different perspectives the conclusions can be accepted with reasonable confidence. If the conclusions differ, the result may be in some doubt, but in addition the extent of difference may itself be an indicator of some underlying problem.

4.6.3 Examining Selected Issues in depth

This strategy involves selecting some issue or planned development and looking at how it was dealt with and what follow up action was taken. An example might be to begin with a user survey of library services and follow action taken in response to that survey by a library reference or advisory group, action or non-action by library staff, and subsequent survey evaluations. Data for consideration might include the survey results, minutes of relevant meetings, interviews with staff, interviews with students etc. Similar processes could be used for action taken following teaching evaluations, by looking at course reports, action plans, subsequent action to implement the action plans, and later evaluations.

Since there is an enormous range of possible issues and many different functions and activities it is necessary to select a sample of matters to investigate. These should include some of the matters on which the institution has focused in its own self-study, but should not be restricted to these. Other matters may be determined through a

random selection process or by an analysis of data provided and identification of things that may have been missed or deliberately avoided.

4.6.4 Style of Questions

The style of questioning can lead to very different relationships and quality of information gained. As a general principle the questioners should try to communicate genuine interest in the matter being considered and a full and sympathetic understanding of the response. Questions should be carefully planned and carry the impression that the questioner has already carefully considered information that had previously been provided and is pursuing an important matter in greater depth. Things to avoid include asking multiple questions simultaneously, using lengthy preambles, and telling anecdotes, describing another organization including the interviewer's own institution, and offering alternative possibilities for action in dealing with the matter under discussion without being asked to do so.

Apart from this general information gathering and questioning techniques there are some important quality issues that are highlighted in the standards and the self evaluation scales, and the National Qualifications Framework. These may be helpful for panel members planning their interviewing and investigating strategies.

4.6.5 Considering Inputs, Processes, and Outcomes

In reviewing an institution or program inputs, processes and outcomes must be considered. The most important of these, and the focus of the documents used, is outcomes.

Inputs are the resources that are put into a program – staff, libraries, laboratories, and so on. These are necessary of course and it will be important to check that necessary resources are available to support the programs. This is a largely quantitative measure.

Processes are the things that happen in the institution. They need to be efficient, and effective in promoting student learning, and in providing the necessary services and resources to support that learning. Many of the items in the standards documents and the self evaluation scales relate to processes followed in good institutions. An important part of the quality evaluation relates to whether these things are done in the institution or the program that is under review, and how well they are done.

Outcomes are the results of the activities that take place in an institution. They relate to student learning, research conducted, and contributions to the community.

For student learning the outcomes are what students are able to do as a result of completion of their program. They are a set of skills and abilities that the student will have developed. They are described in general terms for each of the domains of learning at increasing levels of performance in the *National Qualifications Framework*.

- knowledge associated with a field of advanced study or professional practice (knowledge domain)
- high level conceptual and cognitive skills that are used for solving complex problems, and for decision making in unique and unpredictable circumstances; (Cognitive skills domain)
- general competencies needed in a range of employments, such as communication, mathematical and analytical skills including use of IT Communication, IT and numerical skills domain)
- acceptance of personal and team responsibilities, capacity for learning, and leadership; ((interpersonal skills and responsibility domain)

And in certain fields of study, the capacity to perform high level physical skills. (Psychomotor skills domain)

It is these abilities that matter to employers, and which students must have developed if they are to progress in their careers. They need to be set at a level that is comparable with the outcomes achieved by universities elsewhere in the world, and the *National Qualifications Framework* is designed with that aim in mind.

For research activity (which is a required activity for universities but not essential for colleges) the outcome is not only the amount of research conducted (which can be assessed by such things as numbers of refereed publications or amounts of competitive research funding) but also its value and significance. This is more difficult to assess, but can be evaluated through the use of indicators such as international citation indices or patents. Research can be

basic or applied, may deal with the application of knowledge and theory to local or international problems, may be funded from a variety of public and private sources, and may involve applications of insights from one field of knowledge to another. It should include further applications and extensions or research undertaken by faculty in postgraduate programs. However to be judged as legitimate research it must have been subject to some appropriate form of independent peer review.

For outcomes relating to an institution's contributions to its community the concern is not just to the amount of such activity, but also to its significance and value. Consequently evidence provided by an institution about community contributions should include some evidence about what difference they have made. Such contributions should include activities provided by an institution from within its own resources, and services for which charges are made.

4.6.6 Checking on Standards of Learning Outcomes

Institutions have been asked to establish learning outcomes that are consistent with the *National Qualifications Framework*, that meet the requirements for professional practice, and to introduce mechanisms to verify standards of learning outcomes. This verification of standards of learning is important to ensure internal consistency within an institution (an A in one course or section of a course should be comparable to an A in any other) and to ensure that the quality of learning outcomes is consistent with that achieved in other good institutions (an A at one institution should be comparable to the quality of achievement to earn an A at another). The standards for learning and teaching include a requirement that there be systems in place for verifying standards of student achievement and self study reports should include descriptions of how this was done.

External reviewers familiar with particular fields of study can look at samples of students work and form opinions of the standards achieved. However a more important and more valid approach is to look closely at the processes used by the institution to verify standards, the conclusions reached as a result of those processes, and action taken if any problems are found.

4.6.7 Testing and Verifying in Relation to Standards

Institutions have been advised that criteria for accreditation will include generally accepted standards of good practice in higher education. Exactly what these "generally accepted standards of good practice" are could be open to debate. However to provide a guide, descriptions of a number of these practices have been provided by the Commission as "standards" documents, and self evaluation scales have been provided to assist institutions and programs managers in their self evaluations relative to them. The standards are defined in eleven broad areas of activity relating to functions carried out in higher education institutions, with sub sections and individual items that relate to specific activities within each area. Self evaluation of performance in institutions should be based on these standards, and the extent to which the institutions (or programs) own goals and objectives are achieved. Evaluations for accreditation are based on the same criteria.

Higher education institutions have been asked to base their judgments about quality on evidence as much as possible and to indicate in their reports the evidence on which their conclusions are based. This should make it possible for a reviewer to consider the evidence and make a judgment about whether the conclusions reached are valid.

For a program to be accredited, it must be consistent with the qualifications framework, and meet at an acceptable level all of the standards relating to programs and learning support services set out in the Standards for Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Higher Education Programs. For an institution to be accredited it must meet all the standards in the Standards for Quality Assurance and Accreditation of the overall quality of its educational programs. Of course it does not have to be achieving high standards on every item considered. However if problems are found they should be identified and acceptable strategies for dealing with them must be in place.

4.7 Some Issues in the Conduct of External Reviews

4.7.1 Judgments of Teaching Effectiveness

Observations of teaching are unlikely to provide a valid or reliable view of teaching effectiveness in the short and unusual circumstances of an external review, and are not encouraged. However, assessment of the effectiveness of

teaching is extremely important and evidence about it should be provided by the institution through such things as examples and overall analyses of student assessments of teaching effectiveness and trends in these over time, induction and peer support strategies, and institutional research on the effectiveness of techniques to develop different kinds of learning outcomes.

In relation to teaching strategies the information should include not only the strategies themselves, the extent to which they are used, and their effectiveness in developing the outcomes they are designed for. Reference should be made not only to knowledge acquisition but also to personal responsibility and capacity for self-directed learning; the skills of communication, transfer of learning and creative problem solving that are emphasized in the *National Qualifications Framework*. The evidence provided by the institution should be verified through discussions with students, through consideration of results of program reviews and surveys of graduates and their employers, and any other measures the institution may have introduced.

4.7.2 Discussions with Students.

As noted above, important objectives of the review are to verify the outcomes of the institution's internal review processes and to make informed and independent judgments about quality. This requires free and frank comment from a representative cross section of the student body. However the tone of cooperation in planning for improvement should be preserved in discussions with students, and a careful balance must be achieved between identifying problems and confirming strengths.

The comments of students may be inhibited by cultural sensitivities such as reluctance to criticize, unwillingness to communicate with or in front of members of staff, or by fear of consequences if critical comments are reported back to the institution. Consequently they should be encouraged to speak openly and frankly with assurance of complete confidentiality, and if necessary on an individual basis. Any such assurances must be honored. On the other hand individual students may have experienced personal difficulties that are not representative of the student group as a whole, and make criticisms that do not accurately reflect the true situation.

In many institutions it will be important for review panel members of the same sex to discuss issues with students in an informal way, and the experience of review panel members in other institutions is important in interpreting comments. Where critical comments are made they should be acknowledged in a non-judgmental way, and an opportunity taken without identifying the student concerned to verify the concern with the institution.

At least one meeting should be held with a representative group of students, and if there are separate sections for male and female students, with students in both sections. At any such meetings the members of the review panel should be introduced by a senior member of staff, the purpose of the meeting and the basis for selection of students described, and the desirability of providing representative and confidential comments emphasized. The member of staff should then leave the meeting, and return at a prearranged time to conclude the discussion.

Questions raised by panel members will vary according to the issues emphasized in the review. They might include some general matters such as how are the views of students sought; and how influential are those views when decisions are made; do students serve on institutional committees; have their views been sought in the institution's self study; and how confident are students at the institution that they are acquiring the intended range of learning outcomes and whether they are mastering the skills required for practice in their chosen profession. Questions on particular issues might be derived from the *standards documents and self evaluation scale*, from issues raised in the self-study and from program and course reports. A list of possible questions appropriate to the institution and or program concerned should be prepared beforehand by the members of the panel.

4.7.3 Discussions with Teaching Staff

As for discussions with students it is important to verify conclusions of the self-study and identify other issues that should be addressed through informal and formal discussions with faculty. There are potential barriers to effective communication with staff just as there are with students. The experience and skill of members of the panels will be important in overcoming these problems. Some general considerations that reviewers should keep in mind are discussed below.

It is important that the cooperative and constructive tone of the review is maintained and that it is made clear that the role of the review panels is not to find fault or to resolve disputes. If a member of staff has serious concerns these

should be acknowledged, but the person referred to appropriate avenues for consideration at the institution or the responsible ministry. Members of the review panel should not be drawn into discussions with an aggrieved member of staff about an issue of personal concern.

Individual cases of dispute are not the business of the review, but they are relevant if they indicate a general issue of quality or administrative procedure. An appropriate response to an issue of this sort may be to discuss the issue with the institution. However great care should be taken not to probe matters that are confidential to a particular individual, but rather to determine whether the issue is of general concern, and whether the institution's processes are adequate to deal with it.

In discussions with staff, review panel members should be non-judgmental, and should avoid making comparisons with other institutions, including their own. Opinions about adequacy or otherwise of the institution's activities should, of course, be formed during the review, and evidence to support those opinions clearly identified. However these opinions should only be expressed in the confidential meetings of the panel. Communications about the conclusions of the review should only be expressed by the chair in the final meetings with the Rector of Dean and senior staff, and following the review only through the formal report approved by the Commission.

4.7.4 Matters of Commercial Sensitivity or Institutional Confidentiality

The review panel should be sensitive to personal matters that might be raised, or matters affecting individuals that should be confidential to individual students or members of staff. They should also exercise discretion in relation to matters the institution regards as commercially sensitive. It is highly desirable that any such matters be identified in advance so plans can be made for dealing with them, but this will not always happen. Verification of quality sometimes requires information about things the institution may want to keep confidential. If access to information that the review panel regards as important is denied by the institution, the possibility of a confidential examination by two members of the panel should be discussed with the Rector of Dean, or the senior member of staff responsible for assisting the review. Those two members would then report back to the rest of the group without revealing confidential details.

If this approach is not acceptable by the institution the review panel should indicate in its report that the information was not provided, and whatever conclusions follow from that non-provision should be included in the report. A decision whether to require the information will be made by the Commission and in the case of a dispute between the Commission and the institution, the matter will be resolved by the Minister. In such a dispute the Commission's decision on accreditation must be guided by the information available to it, and its responsibility as an independent authority to accredit institutions and programs on the basis of evidence about their quality. It should not grant approval or accreditation if it believes that it does not have sufficient valid information on which to base a decision.

4.8 Deciding on Recommendations

The simplest way of doing this is to consider each standard in turn. What evidence is there and how does the level of provision compare with the descriptions of standards in the *Standards for Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions and the Standards for Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Higher Education Programs*. Is the panel's assessment consistent with the assessment made by the institution? The panel needs to make an assessment based on the documents read, the questions asked, and the facilities seen. The evidence itself should be evaluated. Is it sufficient? Or is it necessary to find out more or to attach a condition in relation to this criterion? Or does the evidence fall so far short of what is required that the criterion has not been met?

To recommend accreditation or re-accreditation of an institution or a program it is necessary to be satisfied that all the standards have been met. As noted above, this does not mean that every single item in the self evaluation scales must receive a high rating. However the overall performance for each standard and subsection of standards must be satisfactory, and any specific difficulties or weaknesses identified and strategies in place to deal with them

4.9 Preparation of a Review Report

An initial draft of the review report will normally be prepared by members of the panel on the day following the review. It will draw on information from the institutional or program self study and other information provided by the institution prior to the review, and the notes prepared by the members of the panel during the review and the discussions held at that time. The comments and conclusions should represent the opinions of the panel members after reviewing the evidence provided by the institution and their own investigations in the review. Wherever possible opinions should be supported by evidence that has been seen and this evidence should be referred to in the report. Comments will not be made on individuals.

The report should not attempt to present a comprehensive description of the institution's activities. Rather, after a brief introductory description to provide a context, it should make comments on each of the relevant standards, but not on all the specific practices used in the self evaluation scales. Comments are only required on the individual matters that need to be referred to.

An important element in the report is the verification of the institution's judgments of the quality of matters considered in its self-studies, and confirmation of those judgments or suggested variations should be included. In addition the report should note in its comments any activities or initiatives that should be commended, and any that represent weaknesses that should be addressed. Where such matters have already been identified by the institution and are being addressed this should be acknowledged, though the panel may wish to comment on whether the action being taken is likely to resolve the problem.

Where practices are commended and have potential for implementation elsewhere, the Commission may invite the institution to prepare a brief summary for inclusion in a "Good Practice" website.

The report by the panel should include a recommendation on the decision by the Commission to accredit the institution or program, indicating the reasons for its recommendation.

Reports on reviews may vary to some extent reflecting differing issues and circumstances. However they will normally include the following sections:

- Introduction, including a brief description of the institution and significant features of its mission, planned development, and environment. This would be derived largely from information provided by the institution. In an institutional review the report will include an introductory section describing the history and main features of the institution.
- Description of procedures and range of activities followed by the review panel.
- Introductory comments, suggestions and recommendations relating to the institution's quality of performance in relation to each of the standards identified in the *Standards for Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education Institutions (or Programs)*. In its observations the panel should acknowledge instances where problems have been identified by the institution and are being dealt with (though it may comment on whether the response is adequate). It will also note any commendations for activities that might be considered for inclusion in the Commissions "Good Practices" website.
- List of suggestions and recommendations for consideration by the institution.
- The Review panel's recommendation to the Commission on whether the institution or the program(s) should be accredited.

The final report is a public document owned by the Commission and responsibility for it rests with the Commission. When it has been finalized it will be made publicly available by the Commission. However before that stage is reached the following steps will be taken.

(i) The draft of the report will be given to the Commission at the conclusion of the review visit. The Commission may make editorial changes for consistency of style and presentation, but will not change the substance of the

comments and recommendations that the report contains. If changes are made the edited draft will be sent to the chair for comment.

(ii) The draft report will be sent to the institution to check for accuracy of factual information. Responses should be specific, citing page references, and indicating what changes in wording would be required to correct an error. Specific evidence should be provided in support of the change. Three weeks will be allowed for this response.

If significant corrections are requested the Commission may consult with the chair of the panel about the changes and any implications for the recommendations in the report, and may amend the document at its discretion. In case of disputes over factual material the Commission may arrange for independent advice on the matter, and will make a final decision following consideration of the advice it receives. It is emphasized that this step in the process is designed to check for factual errors, not to provide an opportunity for changing the conclusions of the report. However if major factual errors are identified appropriate amendments should be made.

(iii) The Commission will review the document and prepare a final version. Copies of the report will then be provided to the institution and made available to the responsible Ministry. Arrangements may be made by the Commission for the report to be included on its web site. The report will not be made publicly available until after it has been provided to the institution. This is done to ensure the institution is fully informed before the report reaches the public domain

(iv) The report of the review panel will be considered by the Commission and a decision made on accreditation. The Commission may decide to accredit the institution or the program, to defer consideration until certain conditions had been met, or to deny accreditation. Where an institution or program has been provisionally accredited the Commission may at its discretion agree to a continuation of that provisional accreditation for a specified period and subject to certain conditions.

4.10 Action Following a Review

After completion of each review the Commission will invite the institution to provide confidential comments on the value and effectiveness of the review process and the contribution of the panel to its quality assurance processes. These comments will be used by the Commission in reviewing its own procedures, and in selection of personnel for future reviews.

The Commission will also invite the review panel to provide any informal comments on the self study and review process at the institution. These comments will not be included in the report of the review panel. However the information will be used by the Commission in reviewing and improving its own arrangements, and information relevant to the institution's activities will be passed on to it for consideration in improving its quality assurance processes.

The institution will be expected to consider the external review report and take appropriate action in response, as part of its normal quality assurance processes.

In cases where there are specific requirements relating to accreditation the institution will be expected to indicate what specific action it will take in response, and to report within a specified period of time that the necessary action has been effectively taken.

This follow up should occur in two stages.

First, within three months of the receipt of the final report and the decisions of the Commission on accreditation the institution should advise the Commission of action it proposes to take in relation to recommendations in the external review report.

Second, when that action has been taken, a report should be provided to the Commission. If that report is not received by the date specified the Commission will investigate. Information about the action taken and results will be included with the external review report on the Commission's web site.

Where there are no formal accreditation or approval requirements but matters requiring attention have been identified in recommendations, follow up by the institution should still occur.

These follow up activities are intended to indicate responsiveness of the institution to constructive suggestions for improvement rather than being a further major imposition. Consequently major reports are not expected, just summaries of plans and (verified) results. Further, unless specific requirements or conditions have been set by the Commission or the responsible Ministry it is not obligatory for the institution to respond in precisely the way the review panel has recommended. The responsibility for quality improvement rests with the institution and it is open to it to search for different solutions in keeping with its mission and strategic planning processes.

What is required however is that concerns be recognized, taken seriously, and appropriate action taken to deal with them. The recommendations made by the panel, and the responses made by the institution, will be known in subsequent external reviews, and the appropriateness and effectiveness of action taken will form part of the evaluation undertaken at that time. If appropriate action is not taken by the institution in dealing with concerns raised, it will be up to the relevant Ministry to take action, which may include directions or sanctions appropriate to the problem concerned. The Commission may deny or suspend approval or accreditation, but will not act as a policeman in enforcing responses.

4.11 Management of Disputes and Appeals

Background

The National Commission for Academic Accreditation and Assessment (NCAAA) values its responsibility of determining standards and criteria for academic accreditation, selecting experienced and knowledgeable academic professionals who are recognized in their fields and ensuring that those standards are applied consistently for all institutions and programs. The accreditation decisions are based on the evidence presented by the institution that supports the institution's case for compliance with the NCAAA standards, policies and procedures existing at the time of the evaluation.

The processes for external review and preparation of reports are intended to be consultative and supportive rather than critical and adversarial. Nevertheless, it is possible that differences of opinion or value judgments, or differences about the accreditation or approval decisions rendered by the Commission may arise. Consequently, the Commission Appeals Process is available to the institutions for resolution of such concerns. In this case, the institution is provided the opportunity to appeal directly to the Secretary General of the Commission citing evidence in support of its appeal.

The appeal process is designed to provide procedural fairness for the appellant. However consideration is also given to the public interest in the outcomes of the accreditation and approval process in ensuring provision of high quality educational programs.

Consequently if an appeal is upheld, the generally accepted resolution will be to have an immediate re-assessment of all or part of the grievance, rather than to grant accreditation.

Terms of Reference for Appeals Processes

Purpose

- 1.)** To provide institutions and program leaders an opportunity to bring to the Commission's attention matters related to concerns about the procedural and/or administrative conduct of the evaluation.
- 2.)** To present to the Commission apparent errors in fact or misinterpretation of evidence in a self-study report or errors of observation during an on-site visit.
- 3.)** To provide an external, third party assessment of the merits, reasonableness and validity of an appealable decision.

Management of the Appeals Process

Appealable Issues

Procedural action on an appeal will be based on the evidence available to the review panel and the Commission at the time decisions was taken. Complaints or disputes arising from an accreditation decision may relate to:

- 1.) Substantive errors of fact or observation during a site visit.
- 2.) Misinterpretations of the evidence in a self-study report.
- 3.) Failure of a review panel to follow the NCAAA published standards, policies and procedures that are sufficiently serious to undermine the validity of the evaluation.
- 4.) The manner in which the Commission staff or persons it appoints handled the procedures published in the Commission's Handbooks.

Arrangements for an Appeal

- 1.) An institution or program may challenge an appealable decision by a formal letter of appeal addressed to the Board of Directors of the NCAAA within 30 days of receipt of written notification of the Commission's decision. The appeal must specify the basis on which the appeal is made, which must be either that the Commission did not follow its policies and procedures, or substantive errors in fact, misinterpretation of the evidence in a self-study report or errors of observation during the on-site visit.
- 2.) Grounds for challenging the accreditation decision must be sufficiently serious to undermine the validity of the decision, or unreasonable judgments about an institution or program on the basis of the evidence available to the review panel and the Commission at the time of the visit.
- 3.) A non-refundable appeal fee will be charged to the institution or program filing the appeal, such fee will be submitted with the letter of appeal.
- 4.) The institution will be advised that the decision of the Board of Directors after considering the Appeals Panel recommendations will be final.
- 5.) The accreditation status of the institution shall not change until all procedural processes of the appeal have been exhausted or terminated.

Appointment of an Appeals Panel

- 1.) Within Thirty (30) days of receipt of the institution or program's appeal, the member of the Board nominated by the Board for oversight of appeals will consider the submission and if he believes there are reasonable grounds for considering the appeal will appoint a three-person appeal panel to advise on the matter.
- 2.) The three persons will include one member of the Board of Directors as chair and two persons familiar with NCAAA standards and procedures and with expertise in quality assurance matters in educational institutions relevant to the dispute, or program. None of the persons nominated will have had an affiliation with the institution or program filing the appeal or with the accreditation process which is the subject of the appeal.

Scope of an Appeal

- 1.) The appeal is a challenge to the accreditation decision of the Commission based on the evidence before the review panel and the Commission at the time of the visit.
- 2.) The letter of appeal and supporting information must not refer to facts or conditions that were not presented to the review panel at the time of the visit.
- 3.) The procedural and substantive issues addressed by the Appeal Panel will be limited to those stated in the appeal letter.

Decisions of the Appeal Panel

- 1.) The Appeal Panel may reject the appeal if it believes the accreditation decision was reasonable or not sufficiently serious to undermine the validity of the accreditation decision.
- 2.) If the Appeals Panel finds that there is insufficient evidence to make a fully informed decision or that there was a probable violation of policy or procedures or other technicalities, or an error in judgment of sufficient magnitude to affect the validity of the accreditation decision, the normal remedy will be to have an independent re-assessment of all or part of the issue or issues concerned, rather than to grant or withdraw accreditation.
- 6.) If an appeal is supported by the Appeal Panel after considering evidence available to the review panel and the Commission at the time the original decision was made, the Appeal Panel may recommend to the Board of the Commission that it reverse the decision of the Commission. However, the decision of the Commission will not be reversed without compelling evidence to support this action. In other words, the Appeal Panel must become aware of and document evidence *conclusive* that invalidates the accreditation decision of the Commission and communicate this evidence and its recommendation to the Board.

Report of the Appeal Panel

- 1.) The Chair of the Appeal Panel will provide a written report to the Chair of the Board detailing the findings of the Appeal Panel and describing the evidence on which its findings are based. Supporting documentation should accompany the report for any finding that is contrary to the Commission's accreditation decision.
- 2.) The Chair of the Board will respond to the institution or program with written notification of the result of the appeal. If the appeal was upheld, the report to the institution will be amended in keeping with the decisions of the Appeal Panel. If the appeal was not upheld, the institution will be notified that the issues in dispute were considered and the appeal was not upheld.
- 3.) The decision of the Board of the Directors after considering the Appeals Panel findings will be final.

ATTACHMENT 1

APPLICATION FOR PROVISIONAL ACCREDITATION OF A HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION

Application Summary

1. Name of institution _____
3. Location (s) _____
4. Date of approval of initial license to establish institution _____
5. Date of commencement _____
6. Actual and/or planned student enrolments within five years of commencement

	Number of Students			No of Courses Offered
	Male	Female	Total	
Year 1				
Year 2				
Year 3				
Year 4				
Year 5				

7. Proposed Programs and levels of awards (include foundation or preparatory year if these are planned)

Foundation or Preparatory Year (if applicable)	Areas of Study	Year of Introduction

Higher Education Program Title(s)	Field of Study	Major Study or Track(s)	Year of Introduction

(Notes: Levels of Awards must be consistent with Qualifications Framework)

Extend table as necessary to include programs planned for the first five years.

Detailed program proposals will be required for those to be offered within the first three years.)

8. Statement of Mission

9. Name of partner or sponsoring institution (if any)

10. Language(s) of Instruction

11. Existing institution(s) to be included in a merged institution (if any)

Documents to be submitted with Application

1. Letter granting the initial license to establish the institution
2. Detailed proposal for provisional accreditation of the institution with attachments as required.
3. Proposals for provisional accreditation of programs to be offered within the first three years.
4. Copy of agreement with partner institution (if any)

ATTACHMENT 2

INFORMATION REQUIRED BY THE NCAAA IN A PROPOSAL FOR PROVISIONAL ACCREDITATION OF AN INSTITUTION

A detailed proposal is required. The proposal should set out plans for the institution that contain sufficient information to demonstrate that requirements for quality assurance and accreditation will be met. This information should be presented in an unbound, page numbered report; single sided, with a table of contents. Where supporting information required is in separate documents these should be referred to in the text of the proposal and attached as numbered appendices. A copy of the documents should be provided in English or Arabic as determined by the Commission in hard copy and in electronic form on CD.

Descriptive and General Information

- The title of the institution
- Name and contact details of a person from whom additional information can be obtained
- The existing and/or proposed location of the institutions campus or campuses
- A brief statement of any special issues or circumstances affecting the development of the institution
- Fields of study and levels to which programs are to be offered within the first five years.
- Titles and levels of academic awards for programs to be offered within the first five years with details for each campus where more than one campus is proposed.
- Time line for establishment of the institution including development of facilities and provision of major equipment, staffing, and commencement of programs, with the numbers of students expected to be enrolled on a year by year basis for the first five years.
- Facilities and equipment must be sufficient for the courses to be offered in the first year, adequate for the number of students to be enrolled, and there must be firm commitments for further developments to meet requirements during subsequent years to meet the requirements for the planned numbers of students and programs.

Staffing must include the staff required to lead the development of each program to be offered and carry out teaching responsibilities (i.e. a fully qualified and appropriately experienced head of department or program coordinator in the field concerned should be appointed, and staff employed to teach the courses to be offered in the first and each subsequent year.) Evidence of the availability of teaching staff could include completed contracts of employment with appropriate commencement dates prior to the start of the classes concerned.

Information Relating to Quality Standards

Mission

Concise statement of the mission of the institution and goals for achievement in the first five years.

A brief statement of the rationale for the mission including reference to major economic, cultural and demographic features of the region in which the institution is to be located.

Governance and Administration

Charts showing the proposed general and academic administrative structure of the institution.

Titles and job descriptions for senior positions.

Titles, terms of reference and membership of academic and administrative boards and committees. If the proposed institution is to be established by an international institution or other organization the relative responsibilities of the Saudi Arabian institution and the international institution or other organization should be clearly specified.

A copy of the constitution or articles of governance for the institution.

Quality Assurance System

A statement setting out organizational arrangements, responsibilities, processes and timelines for introduction of quality assurance arrangements dealing with the matters described under Standard 3 in Standards for Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions. This system should include proposed key performance indicators and benchmarks to be used for evidence of achievement. Details should be provided of staffing, resource provisions and terms of reference for a quality center and quality committee, a list of key performance indicators, sources of benchmarks for comparisons of quality of performance, and an annual quality performance monitoring system.

Learning and Teaching

(Note: This section deals with overall institutional processes and arrangements for assuring the quality of teaching and learning throughout the institution. The accreditation of individual programs is dealt with separately in applications for program accreditation.)

List of programs and qualifications to be awarded. These should be consistent with the National Qualifications Framework and planned dates of commencement for each program should be provided.

Summary of any special student attributes that the institution intends to develop in its students, and strategies to be used in developing those attributes.

Details of policies or regulations establishing processes for verification of achievement of standards of intended learning outcomes by students and other aspects of course and program quality

Student admission requirements

Strategies to be followed in evaluating and improving teaching effectiveness

Systems for support of student learning including regulations governing faculty workloads and availability for student counseling and advice, tutorial assistance, and mechanisms for monitoring student progress and workload.

Institutional processes for course development and review including program approval procedures, employer and student feedback, and industry or professional advice on programs.

If the new institution incorporates an existing institution or institutions, details of transition arrangements to ensure opportunities for current students to complete their programs.

If the institution is to be established under sponsorship by or in partnership with another institution, a copy of any contracts establishing those arrangements and, a description of the processes to be used for evaluating their effectiveness.

If courses are to be wholly or partly offered by distance education details of plans to meet the NCAA Standards for Distance Education and the requirements of the Ministry of Higher Education.

Student Administration and Support Services

Identification (where a standard computing package is to be used) or description of the computing system to be used for student records and administration. This must be appropriate for the programs offered and provide reliable and secure student records, and have the capacity to provide the data necessary for key performance indicators.

Details of administrative arrangements and funding provisions for student services including extracurricular activities, and indicators to be used for evaluation of quality of these provisions and services.

Plans for provision of student services, including medical, general counseling and academic advice.

If student residences are to be provided by the institution, details of supervision arrangements and services to be made available.

Copies of regulations dealing with the following matters should be provided.

- Registration and admission procedures.
- Security and privacy of student records.
- Communication and publication of results.
- Student progress rules.
- Student discipline procedures.
- Fee collection and refund policies if applicable.
- Student appeal procedures.
- Codes of Conduct for students, faculty and staff.
- Assessment for advanced standing on admission.

Learning Resources

Details of the nature and extent of learning resource provision including the library and reference collection. An explanation should be given of the relationship of these plans to the approach to be taken to teaching and learning in the programs to be offered.

Details of electronic and web based material to be made available.

Details of computing facilities to be made available for access to electronic material through a library or learning resource center.

Details of planning and evaluation processes for learning resource provision, and indicators and benchmarks of effectiveness of provision
Sufficient information should be provided about budget allocations, organization and user support, for an independent assessment of adequacy of provision.

Facilities and Equipment

Copy of information technology policy and associated regulations including codes of conduct, security, compatibility of software and hardware.
An independent report on the adequacy of equipment for administrative and teaching requirements. For a proposed university or other institution that is intended to be involved with research or the provision of postgraduate studies, an independent report on the adequacy of planned facilities and equipment for the proposed level of research activity.

Faculty and Staff and Employment Processes

A table showing proposed faculty and staff numbers in each year for the first three years in relation to the numbers of students proposed to be enrolled, the courses to be offered, and the ratios of faculty and staff to students in each year.
Statement of policies on level of qualifications required for employment of teaching staff.
Details of regulations, processes and opportunities for staff professional development.
Planned system for recruitment, and orientation and training of new teaching and other staff.
Policy and regulations on supervision and evaluation of staff, and mechanisms for recognizing and rewarding outstanding performance.
Policies and regulations on dispute resolution, discipline and appeal procedures.

Research

Policy on teaching staff participation in scholarship and research.

(For a proposed university, or other institution wishing to develop postgraduate programs or research activities.)

Research development plan including administrative arrangements, priority fields for development, mechanisms for cooperation with community and other organizations, and timelines for implementation.
Policy on maintenance and management of equipment obtained through research funding.
Strategy and timelines for development of higher degree research programs.
Policy on student participation in staff and institutional research.
Policy and regulations on intellectual property and commercialization of research.
Summary of indicators and benchmarks to be used in evaluating the amount and quality of research activity.

Institutional Relationships With the Community

Community relations strategy including policy and mechanisms for encouraging staff involvement in community activities.
Indicators and benchmarks to be used in evaluating the quality of community relationships.

ATTACHMENT 3

INFORMATION REQUIRED IN A PROPOSAL FOR PROVISIONAL ACCREDITATION OF A NEW PROGRAM

For the Commission to grant provisional accreditation of a new program it must be satisfied that if the plans for the introduction of the program are implemented as proposed it will meet requirements for full accreditation.

Consequently as plans are developed careful consideration should be given to the standards set out in the Commission's documents, *Standards for Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Higher Education Programs* and the *National Qualifications Framework* as well as any specific requirements relevant to the field of study concerned. As part of the planning process attention should be given to the templates for program and course specifications and to the requirements for verifying consistency with the National Qualifications Framework set out in Part 2 of this Handbook. Program developers are expected to seek advice from a range of sources including experienced faculty in the field concerned, relevant employers or professional practitioners, and to consider requirements of relevant specialized accrediting agencies.

The following documents are required in support of an application:

1. Program specification in the form required by the Commission including the Course Planning Matrix.
2. Course specifications (and any field experience specifications if applicable) for all courses to be offered in the first two years of the program and a detailed schedule for the preparation and institutional approval of those to be offered in later years of the program.
3. Program description in the form to be included in the institution's handbook or bulletin. This should include required and elective courses, credit hour requirements and department/college and institution requirements and details of courses to be taken in each year or semester.
4. Brief description of all courses to be offered in the program in the form to be included in the institution's handbook or bulletin.
5. Handbook or bulletin description of admission requirements including any course or experience prerequisites.
6. Regulations specifying requirements for attendance, year to year progression, and program completion.
7. Description of administrative arrangements for the organization and management of the program.
8. Description of process followed in obtaining advice on the content and development of the program including, (for example, consultation and advice from faculty in the field at other institutions or other experts, advice from employers or representatives of the profession, consideration of requirements of professional bodies or accreditation agencies in the field concerned.) The description should include a summary of advice received, and a copy of any reports or written advice should be attached.
9. Resource Acquisition Schedule.

The program specification includes details of equipment, staffing and resource requirements when the program is fully operational. An application for provisional accreditation must include in addition, a detailed year by year schedule specifying facility, equipment, staffing, and resource requirements for the period until the program is fully implemented. This should be presented in tabular form indicating planning and preparation timelines, details of requirements, expected costs by year and an indication by the relevant authority in the institution (e.g. chief librarian, facilities manager, dean) indicating that the necessary resources will be available when required.

ATTACHMENT 4

PROVISIONAL ACCREDITATION OF A NEW PROGRAM THAT IS IN THE PROCESS OF IMPLEMENTATION

Provisional accreditation of a new program can be granted before the program has started, or after it has started and before the first group of students has graduated. Processes for provisional accreditation of a program that has started will normally occur during the second year of the program, but this timing may be varied by agreement with the Commission.

Requirements

1. Plans for the program as for a normal provisional accreditation before a program starts. However course specifications should be available for all courses in the program rather than only those to be taught during the first two years.
2. This could be presented in tabular form. In any cases where originally planned action has not been taken as planned, an explanation should be given, and revised plans described to meet the requirements concerned.
3. Most recent annual reports for all courses that have already been taught.
4. Most recent annual program report for the program.
5. Student course evaluations for the most recent semester should be available for courses that have been taught.
6. A summary of responses to the course evaluations referred to above with any relevant comments and planned responses. (This could be included with the initial annual program report.
7. The Student Experience Survey (SES) (See NCAAA recommended student survey) should have been completed by students in the second year of the program. A summary of responses to this survey should be provided with relevant comments on those responses.
8. Self Evaluation Scales for Higher Education Programs should be completed, with any items where the program has not reached a stage where information could not be provided marked NA.
9. CVs for all teaching staff in the program.

Items 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, and 8, and a summary of staff qualifications and teaching responsibilities should be provided to the Commission in hard copy and in electronic form. The other items should be available for inspection during a site visit.

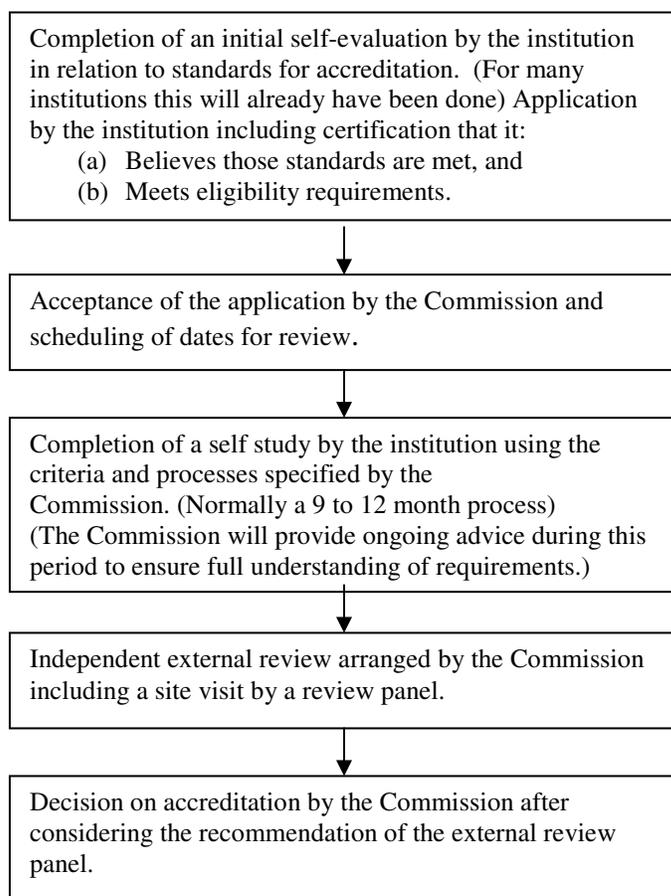
ATTACHMENT 5

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS FOR FULL ACCREDITATION OF A HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION

The process for full accreditation of an institution involves a rigorous self evaluation in relation to the eleven standards specified by the Commission followed by an independent external review. In that external review a panel of reviewers will verify the conclusions of the institution's self evaluation and consider the quality of performance in relation to the NCAAA standards.

Before this process begins the Commission must be satisfied that certain requirements are met. These requirements relate to core elements in the standards for quality assurance and accreditation, and to compliance with the terms and conditions of its official approval or (for a private institution) its license to operate.

The major steps involved are:



Details of requirements for a self study and the external review process are included in Part 3 of *Handbook for Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions*.

Eligibility Requirements

1. The institution must have been established by the government of Saudi Arabia as a higher education institution, or (if a private institution) have been granted a final license to operate as a higher education institution in Saudi Arabia by the Ministry of Higher Education or other government authority authorized by the Higher Council of Education.

- 2.** The activities of the institution must be consistent with its official approval or its final license (including for example its scope or range of programs, the level at which programs are offered, its title as an institution, and any special conditions specified for its license)
- 3.** The institution must have a mission approved by its governing board that is consistent with its official approval or final license and appropriate for an institution of its type and the community or communities in which it operates.
- 4.** The institution must have a strategic plan for the achievement of its mission and major development objectives that includes objectives for quality improvement (or an associated quality improvement plan).
- 5.** The institution must have developed and made readily accessible to teaching and other staff affected by them, a complete set of administrative policies and regulations including terms of reference for major committees and responsibilities of teaching and administrative positions. These should be consistent with the requirements of Standard 2—Governance and Administration and other relevant standards dealing with teaching and administrative and support services. Committees or councils for which terms of reference and membership structure must be available include:
 - a.** University council or board of trustees.
 - b.** Any standing sub committees of the university council or board of trustees.
 - c.** Senior academic committees (including the academic council if applicable) responsible for oversight of and approval of programs or major program changes, research development, and graduate studies programs (if applicable)
 - d.** Any standing sub committees of the senior academic committee.
 - e.** Institutional quality committee. (Note that although it should be normal practice to have a single quality committee for all institutional activities, if separate committees have been established to oversee quality for academic functions and administrative functions the membership structure and terms of reference of both must be available, together with the committee responsible for coordinating the two sets of activities.)
 - f.** Institutional requirements for college academic committees or councils and standing sub-committees
 - g.** Institutional requirements for department academic committees or councils and standing sub-committees.
- 6.** The institution must have published guides (or catalogues or handbooks) that are readily accessible to existing and potential future students, and teaching and other staff, that include accurate and current information about details of programs and courses, degrees offered and graduation requirements, admission requirements and procedures, costs and refund policies (if applicable), rules and regulations directly affecting students.
- 7.** The institution must have program specifications for all of its degree level programs in the form required by the Commission. These program specifications must have been approved by the institution's senior academic committee.
- 8.** The institution must have course specifications in the form required by the Commission for all courses in a majority of its programs and firm commitments to complete specifications for all remaining courses by the proposed time for the external review.
- 9.** The institution must have established and described in policies and regulations processes for program approval and approval of program changes under the authority of a central curriculum committee or equivalent. The processes must provide an appropriate balance between institutional responsibility and oversight, and flexibility for course and program modifications as required at department or college level.
- 10.** The institution must have effective systems for monitoring the quality and supporting improvements in its programs that meet the requirements for Standard 4—Learning and Teaching, and all of the sub sections of that standard.
- 11.** The institution must have established arrangements for maintaining records and providing summary statistical data to departments, colleges and central committees (Quality committee and Curriculum Committee or equivalent) including at least the following information.

- a. Grade distributions for all courses.
 - b. Mean grade distributions for all courses for each department (or program), college, and the institution as a whole. (desirably provided for courses at each year level)
 - c. Completion rates for all courses.
 - d. Mean completion rates for all courses for each department (or program), college, and the institution as a whole. (desirably provided for courses at each year level)
 - e. Year to year progression rates and total program completion rates for all programs.
- 12.** The institution must have established arrangements for student evaluation of courses and programs and mechanisms for the use of those survey results in program and course evaluations at department, college and institutional levels. These arrangements should include a number of common questions across the institution for internal benchmarking purposes, and centralized processing of survey results with regular reports provided to relevant levels within the institution.
- 13.** The institution must have an effective system for quality assurance covering all areas of institutional activity and operating under the supervision of a senior manager within the institution's central administration. Note that this must include some appropriate processes for monitoring the quality of organizations established by the institution or of services contracted out to other organizations such as community colleges, preparatory year programs, regional campuses, or contracted services such as catering, or IT services.
- 14.** The institution must be able to provide reliable data on the Key Performance Indicators specified by the Commission and any additional indicators identified by the institution for its own performance evaluation. Note that for the initial accreditation reviews to be conducted in 2010, it is recognized that systems for collecting required data for all the NCAAA's KPIs may not yet be in place. However data must be available for use in the institutions self study for a majority of items, and plans must have been prepared for the remaining items to be available.
- 15.** The institution must have identified other institutions to provide comparative benchmarks for quality evaluation and where necessary have established agreements for exchange of information on indicators to be used for this purpose. (Note that special agreements are not required for use of published data on performance benchmarks, but are necessary if unpublished data is to be used. An institution may benchmark its performance on different functions against different institutions if it wishes to do so.)
- 16.** If the institution is a university, or if it is another type of institution that has a mission or objectives that include research it must have systems for collecting and reporting data from all departments, colleges and any research centers on the extent and significance of research activity.
- 17.** The institution must have systems in place for collecting and reporting on the extent and usefulness of formal and informal community service activities, including services provided by community service units or centers, and by other individuals, departments or colleges.
- 18.** A new or recently established institution must have been in operation long enough for its first cohort of students to have graduated and information from its graduates about the quality of their programs must be included in evidence provided for accreditation.
- 19.** The institution must have reviewed its activities in relation to the eleven standards specified by the Commission. (This is not intended to be a complete self study, but should involve completion of the self evaluation scales for higher education institutions by a committee or committees with thorough knowledge of all parts of the organization. The Rector (for a university) or the chair of the Board of Trustees (for a private college) must have certified, after considering advice, that in its view the institution has achieved satisfactory performance on each of the eleven standards. (Satisfactory performance for the purpose of this item should be taken to mean an overall rating of at least three stars for each standard and sub-standard on the starring rating system.) (Note: It is not necessary for every single item within the sub sections of the standards to be given three stars or more. However that rating for each standard and sub-standard as a whole must be at that level.

Special Notes

Accreditation by the Commission will be based on all the eleven standards described in the Commissions document *Standards for Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions*. However in the initial accreditation judgments particular emphasis will be given to the standard for learning and teaching and all of the subsections of that standard and to selected other items specified by the Commission.

If a former college or colleges were amalgamated with an existing institution two or more years before the date of application the quality assurance arrangements and eligibility requirements will be expected to apply to the total institution including those former colleges.

If a former college or colleges were amalgamated with an existing institution less than two years before the date of application the quality assurance arrangements and eligibility requirements will not be expected to apply to those former colleges, but the institution will be expected to have finalized plans for the full incorporation of those colleges into the institution and the extension of the quality assurance arrangements to them within no more than two further years. In this situation the accreditation judgment will be based on the previously existing institution and the adequacy of the plans for incorporation of the college(s)

An institutional review for accreditation must deal with the total institution. Appropriate processes must be in place for the quality assurance of any associated community colleges or foundation year programs. An institutional review of a private college or university will include all associated colleges even if they have received a separate license from the MHE.

If an institution offers programs by distance education arrangements for the provision of those programs must meet the requirements of the Ministry of Higher Education for Distance Education, and the programs offered in that mode must also meet the standards for distance education programs set by the NCAAA. Special arrangements may be made an extension of time for this to be done provided a detailed action plan has been prepared for those requirements to be fully met within a maximum period of three years.

Name of Institution _____

Eligibility for Institutional Accreditation

Eligibility Check List		Criteria	
		Criteria Met	Confirmed (NCAAA)
1.	Final license or approved government institution		
2.	Activities consistent with license or approval		
3.	Mission approved and consistent with license or approval		
4.	Strategic plan including plan for quality		
5.	Availability of policies, regulations and terms of reference		
6.	Published guides or handbooks for students		
7.	Program specifications for all programs		
8.	Course specifications		
9.	Regulations and descriptions of processes for program approval, changes, and review		
10.	Systems for monitoring quality and improving programs		
11.	Central maintenance analysis and reporting of statistical data		
12.	Student surveys		
13.	Quality assurance system covering all standards		
14.	Data on Key Performance Indicators		
15.	Arrangements for comparative benchmarks		
16.	Systems for maintenance of data on research (if applicable)		
17.	Systems for maintenance of data on community service activities		
18.	Students graduated		
19.	Compliance with standards for accreditation.		

Signed (Rector or Dean)

Date

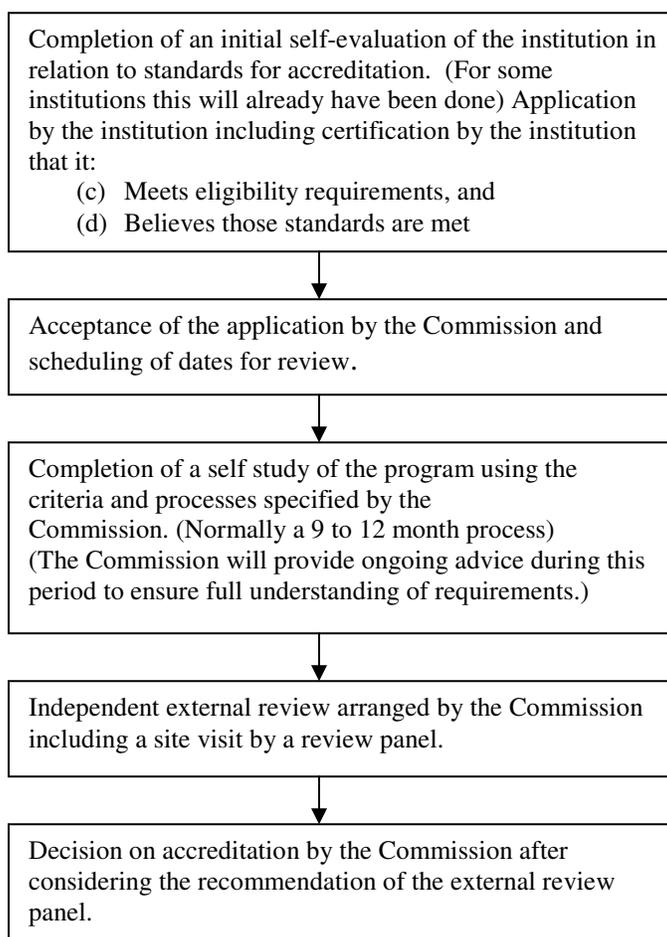
ATTACHMENT 6

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS FOR AN APPLICATION FOR FULL ACCREDITATION OF A HIGHER EDUCATION PROGRAM

The Commission wishes to encourage institutions to seek accreditation as soon as they are in a position to do so. However it wants to recognize quality, not to make negative judgments which would cause difficulties for the institution and program concerned and for the students who are enrolled. Consequently premature applications before a quality system is fully in place will not be considered. Like most other accrediting agencies, the Commission has set some eligibility requirements that must be met before a program can be considered for accreditation.

Before this process begins the Commission must be satisfied that certain requirements are met. These requirements relate to core elements in the standards for quality assurance and accreditation, and to compliance with the terms and conditions of its official approval or (for a private institution) its license to operate.

The major steps involved are:



Details of requirements for a self study and the external review process are included in Part 3 of *Handbook for Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions*.

Accreditation is public recognition that necessary standards are met in the management and delivery of a program, and the quality of learning outcomes achieved by students. The standards must be at least equivalent to what is done in high quality international institutions.

The process for full accreditation of a program involves a rigorous self evaluation in relation to the eleven standards specified by the Commission followed by an independent external review. In that external review a panel of reviewers will verify the conclusions of the program self evaluation and consider the quality of performance in relation to the NCAA standards.

Relationship to Institutional Accreditation

Criteria for program accreditation relate primarily to the program concerned. However the quality of a program and the evidence that is required for accreditation depend to a considerable extent on processes within the institution as a whole. These may be beyond the control of those managing the program but they still affect its quality and must be considered in any program evaluation. Consequently the Commission prefers to review an institution as a whole before going on to accredit individual programs.

However it is recognized that at this transitional stage in the introduction of the quality assurance system in Saudi Arabia considerable work is required before many institutions meet all the requirements for institutional accreditation. This could cause delays for good quality programs that meet eligibility requirements. The Commission does not want to delay accreditation of programs unnecessarily and is prepared to consider programs that meet eligibility requirements before the institution has been accredited, provided certain specified quality assurance requirements are met in the institution.

It is important to recognize that these special arrangements relate to eligibility for consideration for accreditation. If a program is to be accredited ALL the standards required must be met, regardless of who is responsible for delivering particular services.

If the institution has full accreditation by the Commission these institutional requirements will be assumed to have been met. If the institution has not yet been accredited by the Commission the institutional requirements described below will have to be met before a program can be reviewed for accreditation.

Eligibility Requirements for Accreditation of a Higher Education Program

- 1.** The program must be one which the institution is authorized to offer by the relevant government authority. (i.e. at a level and within a field of study that is included in its final license or Ministry or other government approval.
- 2.** The application must have been approved by the Rector of the university or the Dean of the college within which the program is offered.
- 3.** A program specification must have been prepared in the form required by the Commission and approved by the relevant senior committee within the institution.
- 4.** Course specifications must have been prepared in the form required by the Commission and approved for all courses included in the program.
- 5.** Clearly stated descriptions must be available of course content, program requirements, and other regulations affecting students in the program, including institution or college-wide requirements as well as those specific to the program concerned.
- 6.** Completed annual program and course reports in the form required by the Commission must have been prepared for at least one year for the application to be approved and for a second year by the time of the site visit.
- 7.** Student evaluation surveys must have been conducted with a minimum of a 50% response rate for all courses, and for the program. Reports on survey responses must be available for at least two years by the time the self study report is completed.
- 8.** At least one group of students must have completed the program, and feedback from that group of students must be available. (Not required for provisional accreditation)
- 9.** For any program designed to prepare students for professional practice a program, department or college advisory committee must have been established with a majority of members in the profession(s) concerned who are external to the institution. Terms of reference of that committee must include reviewing program evaluation data and providing advice on program content and delivery arrangements.

10. One or more institutions or agencies must have been selected for benchmarking the quality of the program, and a list of indicators that are considered in using these benchmarks must be available. If these indicators include unpublished data agreements must have been completed for the relevant data to be provided.
11. A brief summary report must be provided demonstrating consistency of the program with the requirements of the Qualifications Framework for Higher Education as specified in Part 2 of the Handbook for Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Higher Education, Section 2.7. These requirements include the title of the award to be granted on completion of the program, the number of credit hours (which must be in addition to any studies in a foundation or preparatory program), learning outcomes in the domains of learning, and evidence of the level of achievement of learning outcomes in those domains.
12. The Self Evaluation Scales for Higher Education Programs must have been completed with a rating of at least 3 stars on all standards and sub standards applicable to the program. (Note: It is not necessary for every single item within the scales to be given three stars or more. However that rating for each group of items must be at that level and the Commission may specify certain individual items on which a minimum three star rating is required).

Minimum Institutional Requirements for Eligibility for Program Accreditation

1. Existence of a strategic plan for the development of the institution.
2. Establishment of a quality center and preparation of a strategic plan for quality assurance.
3. Existence of an approved set of key performance indicators for use within the institution that include indicators of program quality. Data from these indicators should be available for the institution as a whole and for a majority of programs in the institution. (including the program seeking eligibility for accreditation)
4. A clear description of the institution's processes for program approval, monitoring program quality, and approval of program changes.
5. Use of student course and program evaluation surveys in at least 50% of colleges or departments across the institution and provision of data for the institution as a whole on common items in a form that can be used for within-institution benchmarking.
6. Provision of student advising and counselling services and processes for the evaluation of the adequacy of those services for the students attending the institution.
7. Provision of adequate facilities for extracurricular activities appropriate for the students attending the institution.
8. Provision of learning resources adequate to support the programs offered by the institution and processes in place to identify and respond to program requirements and evaluate the adequacy of this provision.
9. A system within the institution for providing summary statistical data to departments, colleges and central committees (Quality committee and Curriculum Committee or equivalent) This data must include at least the following information and be available for purposes of benchmarking of programs throughout the institution:
 - a. Grade distributions for all courses.
 - b. Mean grade distributions for all courses for each department (or program), college, and the institution as a whole. (desirably provided for courses at each year level)
 - c. Completion rates for all courses.
 - d. Mean completion rates for all courses for each department (or program), college, and the institution as a whole. (desirably provided for courses at each year level)
 - e. Year to year progression rates for all year levels, and total program completion rates for all programs.
 - f. Data on employment outcomes of graduates.

If programs are offered in sections for male and female students the statistical data must be available for both sections as well as in aggregated form or both sections combined.

Special Notes

1. Accreditation by the Commission will be based on all the standards for higher education programs and will apply regardless of whether services are managed by the college or department concerned or by institutional level organizational units. A separate statement has been prepared indicating matters that will receive special

attention at this stage of development and this should be considered carefully as self studies are undertaken and preparations made for an accreditation review.

2. Programs offered with the same title in different parts of the institution, for example in male and female sections, on a central and a branch campus, by daytime or evening classes, or by face to face or distance education, delivery will normally be considered as the same program and must be considered together in the self study and external review. The Commission **MAY** consider treating them as separate programs in exceptional circumstances but this will require special approval in advance, and normally a difference in the title of the award to make it clear that they are intended to be different programs.

If a program is offered by distance education as well as by face to face instruction the distance education arrangements must meet both the requirements of the Ministry of Higher Education and the distance education standards of the NCAAA.

If programs are offered in different parts of the institution, the self study will have to show clearly any differences between the sections concerned and strategies to respond to any differences in quality found.

Eligibility Requirements for Full Accreditation of a Higher Education Program

Name of Institution _____

Name of Program _____

Tick the column beside each criterion to indicate that it is met.

Eligibility Check List		Criteria	
Program Name _____		Criteria Met	Confirmed (NCAAA)
Program Requirements			
1.	Program authorized		
2.	Application for accreditation approved		
3.	Program specification		
4.	Course specification		
5.	Descriptions of course and program requirements and regulations		
6.	Annual course and program reports		
7.	Student evaluation survey results		
8.	Students graduated, evaluations available		
9.	Program advisory committees		
10.	Indicators and benchmarks		
11.	Consistency with qualifications framework		
12.	Self evaluation scales		

Complete Once for All Programs Applying for Accreditation			
Institutional Requirements for Program Eligibility		Criteria	
		Criteria Met	Confirmed (NCAAA)
1.	Strategic plan for institution		
2.	Quality Center and plan for quality		
3.	Data on KPIs affecting programs across the institution		
4.	Regulations and descriptions of processes for program approval, changes, and review		
5.	Data on Student evaluation surveys across the institution		
6.	Student advising and counselling system		
7.	Facilities for extracurricular activities		
8.	Provision of learning resources and system for responding to program requirements		
9.	Institutional system for provision of statistical data		

Signed (Rector or Dean)

Date

ATTACHMENT 7

REQUIREMENTS FOR REPORTS ON CHANGES IN ACCREDITED PROGRAMS

It is a condition of accreditation by the NCAAA that a brief report be submitted annually to the Commission advising of any amendments made to programs that it has accredited.

A major change is one that significantly affects the learning outcomes, structure, organization or delivery of a program or the basis for its accreditation. The Commission must be advised of proposals to make major changes at least one full semester in advance of the change being introduced or accreditation may be suspended. The Commission will advise the institution if it believes an assessment of the impact of the proposed change on the accreditation status of the program is required.

Information about other changes should be provided in annual reports no later than the beginning of the semester in which they are introduced.

Examples of major changes would be the addition or deletion of a major track within a program (e.g. accounting or international finance majors within a commerce or business degree), the addition or deletion of a core course of study (e.g. mathematics in an engineering degree either deleted or made an elective), a change in title that implied a new or different field of study, reorientation or development of a program to prepare students for a different occupation or profession, or a change in the title of a program or award that implied coverage of a different field of study or professional preparation, a change in the length of a program (number of semesters or number of credit hours), or the inclusion or deletion of an exit point within a longer program (e.g. the granting of an associate degree within a bachelor degree program).

Examples of minor changes that should be reported by the time they are introduced would be the introduction or deletion of an optional course, a change in recommended teaching strategies or assessment processes as stated in the program specification, a change in credit hour allocations for individual courses without changing the total credit requirements for the program, variations in proportions of time allocated for laboratory, lecture or tutorial requirements, changes in processes for program evaluation, or changes in strategies for professional development of faculty and staff.

Changes in text or reference materials, in the assignment of teaching faculty, and minor variations in course content are expected as part of ongoing program development, and need not be reported.

5. Impact (if any) on Students Already Enrolled in the Program
6. (a) Resources Required (if any) (including equipment, facilities, reference material etc.
(b) Have funds been allocated for the provision of these resources? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
If not, What provision has been made for provision of resources required?
7. Faculty Requirements (if any) E.g. Faculty recruitment or retraining, professional development, etc.

ATTACHMENT 7B
ANNUAL REPORT ON MINOR PROGRAM CHANGES

To be submitted annually for all accredited programs where minor changes are made

<p>1. Courses Added to or Deleted from the Program</p> <p>Reasons</p>
<p>2. Changes in Teaching Strategies Recommended in the Program Specification</p> <p>Reasons</p>
<p>3. Changes in Assessment Processes Recommended in the Program Specification</p> <p>Reasons</p>
<p>4. Changes in Program Evaluation Processes</p> <p>Reasons</p>

<p>5. Changes in Arrangements for Course Delivery (Mix of lectures, tutorials, laboratories, etc.)</p> <p>Reasons</p>
<p>6. Changes in Professional Development or Training Provisions for Faculty</p> <p>Reasons</p>
<p>7. Other Changes</p> <p>Reasons</p>