



International Quality Review of Doha Institute for Graduate Studies

August 2022

Contents

About this review	1
Key findings	2
Executive summary.....	2
QAA's conclusions about Doha Institute for Graduate Studies	4
European Standards and Guidelines	4
Good practice	4
Recommendations	4
Explanation of the findings about Doha Institute for Graduate Studies	5
Standard 1.1 Policy for quality assurance	6
Standard 1.2 Design and approval of programmes	8
Standard 1.3 Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment.....	10
Standard 1.4 Student admission, progression, recognition and certification.....	13
Standard 1.5 Teaching staff.....	15
Standard 1.6 Learning resources and student support.....	17
Standard 1.7 Information management.....	20
Standard 1.8 Public information	22
Standard 1.9 Ongoing monitoring and periodic review of programmes	24
Standard 1.10 Cyclical external quality assurance	26
Glossary	28

About this review

This is a report of an International Quality Review conducted by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) at Doha Institute for Graduate Studies. The review took place from 23 to 25 August 2022 and was conducted by a team of three reviewers, as follows:

- Prof Vish Maheshwari
- Dr Nadeem Khan (international reviewer)
- Mr Matthew Kitching (student reviewer)

The QAA Officer for this review was Ms Tess Winther.

International Quality Review (IQR) offers institutions outside the UK the opportunity to have a review by the UK's Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA). The review benchmarks the institution's quality assurance processes against international quality assurance standards set out in Part 1 of the [Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area](#) (ESG).

In International Quality Review, the QAA review team:

- makes conclusions against each of the 10 standards set out in Part 1 of the ESG
- makes conditions (if relevant)
- makes recommendations
- identifies features of good practice
- comes to an overall conclusion as to whether the institution meets the standards for International Quality Review.

A summary of the findings can be found in the 'Key findings' section starting on page 2. The 'Explanations of the findings' section starting on page 5 provides the detailed commentary.

The QAA website gives more information [about QAA](#) and its mission. A dedicated section explains the method for [International Quality Review](#) and has links to other informative documents. For an explanation of terms see the [Glossary](#) at the end of this report.

Key findings

Executive summary

The Doha Institute for Graduate Studies (DI) is a private, not-for-profit institution. It is a private initiative under the Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies (ACRPS) in Doha and is primarily funded by the Qatari state. The establishment of DI in 2015-16 was born from the extensive collaboration between Arab intellectuals and scholars residing in the Arab world, Europe, and North America. Internally, DI is primarily accountable to the Board of Trustees. Externally, DI is accountable to and compliant with the national higher education laws and regulations as managed by the Ministry of Higher Education in Qatar. The Ministry of Higher Education does not have any direct input into the governance structure or executive matters at DI.

DI is a postgraduate degree-awarding institution which seeks to become the foremost centre of academic excellence both regionally and internationally. Its commitment to quality and excellence is central to its mission and ethos. All programmes fulfil the requirements of ministerial licensing and relicensing. International accreditation and partnerships are pursued to enhance its provision and position its provision within international standards.

Programmes are offered at master's and doctoral level and are delivered by two schools: the School of Social Sciences and Humanities (SOSH), and the School of Economics, Administration and Public Policy (SEAPP). The main language of instruction is Arabic with fluency in English as a requisite. At the time of review DI had 450 students, 101 faculty members and 126 administrative staff.

Programmes reflect national and regional needs in terms of intellectual development, practical application, and market needs. Programmes aim to enhance interdisciplinary research which develops evidence that may support interdisciplinary collaboration in advancing knowledge and enhancing the welfare of societies. Two centres support the DI mission as well as students and staff - the Language Centre and Excellence Centre for Training and Consulting. The latter offers specialist training courses for professionals in areas such as government, NGOs, military, and police.

As DI has grown, it has identified changes in leadership and administrative structures due to the increase in students and staff. Significant additions have been the establishment of the Office of Teaching, Learning, and Assessment (OTLA) in 2019. A counsellor was recruited to head the Psychological Counselling Services and support the DI community.

The recruitment of leading Arabic and English-speaking faculty has posed a challenge for DI, especially as the recruitment process is very strict and seeks excellence in teaching and research candidate profiles. A further challenge on recruitment is Qatari employment laws, which hinder DI in offering faculty tenured contracts. Student recruitment has posed a challenge on certain programmes due to the English proficiency required. DI has responded in several ways, such as providing intensive pre-sessional language courses; targeting recruitment from areas which have a high English proficiency; and accepting proficiency in French as an initial qualifier while supporting students to improve their English skills.

In reaching conclusions about the extent to which Doha Institute for Graduate Studies meets the 10 ESG Standards, the QAA review team followed the evidence-based review procedure as outlined in the handbook for International Quality Review (June 2021). DI provided the review team with a self-evaluation and supporting evidence. During the review visit, which took place in August 2022, the review team held a total of seven meetings with the President, senior management team, academic staff, professional support staff, students,

alumni, and external stakeholders. The review team also had the opportunity to tour the facilities and learning resources across the DI Campus in Doha.

In summary, the team found eight examples of good practice and was able to make two recommendations for further enhancement. The recommendations are of a desirable rather than essential nature and are proposed to enable the Institute to build on existing practice which is operating satisfactorily but which could be improved or enhanced. The team did not set any conditions.

Overall, the team concluded that Doha Institute for Graduate Studies **meets** all standards for International Quality Review.

QAA's conclusions about Doha Institute for Graduate Studies

The QAA review team reached the following conclusions about the higher education provision at Doha Institute for Graduate Studies.

European Standards and Guidelines

Doha Institute for Graduate Studies meets all of the 10 ESG Standards and Guidelines.

Good practice

The QAA review team identified the following features of **good practice** at Doha Institute for Graduate Studies.

- The broad socio-cultural impact of programmes offered on the state of Qatar and Arab region (ESG Standard 1.2).
- The strategic and substantial investment in human capital significantly impacts the student-staff ratio of 6:1 and ensures provision of student-centred teaching and learning (ESG Standard 1.3).
- The commitment of faculty to publishing in high-quality peer-reviewed journals with students (ESG Standard 1.5).
- Arrangements for students, especially international and students recruited from conflict zones, are comprehensive and effective (ESG Standard 1.6).
- Specialist support for students, available in-person or virtually, is responsive, accessible and positively impacts experiences of students (ESG Standard 1.6).
- The extensive range of learning resources and high-quality physical environment (ESG Standard 1.6).
- The agile and impactful approach to student feedback enhances the learning experience of students (ESG Standard 1.9).
- Use of external periodic review, including international accreditations, to continuously enhance programmes and institutional practices (ESG Standard 1.10).

Recommendations

The QAA review team makes the following **recommendations** to Doha Institute for Graduate Studies.

- Implement a schedule for a review of policies that impact quality assurance and enhancement (ESG Standard 1.1).
- Formulate a consistent and institution-wide approach to qualitative feedback which supports student development (ESG Standard 1.3).

Explanation of the findings about Doha Institute for Graduate Studies

This section explains the review findings in more detail.

Terms that may be unfamiliar to some readers have been included in a [brief glossary](#) at the end of this report. A fuller [glossary of terms](#) is available on the QAA website, and formal definitions of certain terms may be found in the operational description and handbook for the [review method](#), also on the QAA website.

Standard 1.1 Policy for quality assurance

Institutions should have a policy for quality assurance that is made public and forms part of their strategic management. Internal stakeholders should develop and implement this policy through appropriate structures and processes, while involving external stakeholders.

Findings

1.1 The institutional quality assurance and standards at DI is supported through the Policy for Institutional Effectiveness and Quality Assurance (IEQA). The policy was created in 2016 and extensively reviewed in 2021-22. It sets out the areas of work IEQA is responsible for, including academic programme monitoring; design and development of new programmes and closure of programmes; course approvals and withdrawals; teaching, learning and assessment activities; monitoring and assessment of research activities; capacity building and training in quality assurance.

1.2 DI has established an IEQA Committee responsible for the oversight of the development of proposals governing institutional effectiveness and quality assurance; annual programme monitoring and evaluation; external periodic reviews; and institutional accreditation. This committee features in its membership student representatives and graduates.

1.3 The self-evaluation document (SED) states that DI's quality assurance framework is based on *The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications of Degree-Awarding Bodies in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (FHEQ) and the National Qualification Framework published by the State of Qatar in 2021. Programme-level accreditations are benchmarked against appropriate accreditation frameworks and standards.

1.4 During the review visit meetings, it was further established that DI through the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Quality Assurance (OIEQA) has contributed to the development of the State of Qatar's National Qualification Framework by providing input, and DI's Quality Assurance and Institutional Effectiveness (IEQA) Policy aligns with Qatar's National Qualification Framework.

1.5 The Ministry of Education and Higher Education (Ministry) renewed DI's licence in September 2021 for a further five years, as a recognised higher education institute, endorsing all respective requirements set by Qatari higher education frameworks are met.

1.6 During meetings with staff, it was established that OIEQA regularly meet with key stakeholders to include leadership and management staff, directors and administrative heads, academic and DI council staff, in order to provide guidance and support in the robust implementation of quality assurance policies and procedures to achieve continuous quality enhancement. Furthermore, the review team recognises that OIEQA supports its institutional stakeholders with all required preparatory work regarding accreditations.

1.7 The continuous improvement cycle detailed in the IEQA policy demonstrates how elements of quality assurance such as ongoing monitoring, improvement plans and external periodic review link together to drive the quality assurance process.

1.8 The OIEQA Annual Report sets out the work undertaken during 2020-21 and explains the OIEQA engagement with quality assurance processes as well as interaction with DI staff and students. Each section, for example student course surveys, alumni surveys, student satisfaction surveys, concludes with a range of actions to be implemented.

1.9 The review team established that the coherent implementation of quality processes and policies is monitored through a variety of mechanisms that include alumni surveys, student satisfaction surveys, annual reflection, student achievements and documentational evidence at institutional level.

1.10 Meetings with academic staff presented insights on the implementation of various quality assurance aspects, through curriculum delivery and teaching practices reflecting an effective learning environment. For example, across faculty, training for critical thinking was implemented for students through relative assessment and learning materials as a direct response following the review of student performance; additionally, the introduction of The Quality Matters Rubric™ to support diverse learning needs of students.

1.11 Moreover, during COVID-19 the Institute continued to apply quality assurance measures to capture staff and student engagement experiences so as to provide timely response to issues arising.

1.12 The SED states that key academic offices play an important role in the quality advancement of teaching, learning, resources and research. The Office of Planning, Development and Documentation (OPDD) works closely with OIEQA. The President oversees the OIEQA. The DI committee structure, also discussed during the review visit, provides insight into the governance of quality assurance at DI.

1.13 As part of its activities, OIEQA supports departments with student course and student satisfaction surveys, and a student satisfaction summary report. In addition to the staff surveys, OIEQA also supports the Institute with alumni surveys and an alumni satisfaction summary report.

1.14 DI requires all its programmes to be accredited by external agencies. This is considered as a form of external quality assurance. During the review visit, it was established that external periodic review and accreditations associated with each of the programmes provides an additional endorsement of high standards in terms of quality and reputation from a student outcomes perspective. It is understood that DI uses international accreditation as an additional quality assurance mechanism, adding value to its degree awards and is a key part of the IEQA system.

1.15 The proactive role of OIEQA was found to ensure an effective integration and consistent implementation of quality assurance across the Institute. This includes a holistic approach to quality assurance through its robust and effective policy and processes. However, the team **recommends** that DI implement a schedule for the review of policies that impact quality assurance and enhancement.

1.16 The review team concludes that DI policies, procedures and governance structure supporting the quality assurance form a key part of the strategic leadership and management directive of DI. The robust implementation of quality assurance policies with an intention to enhance students' learning gain throughout the institutional structure is aligned with the requirements of Standard 1.1, which is therefore **met**.

Standard 1.2 Design and approval of programmes

Institutions should have processes for the design and approval of their programmes. The programmes should be designed so that they meet the objectives set for them, including the intended learning outcomes. The qualification resulting from a programme should be clearly specified and communicated and refer to the correct level of the national qualifications' framework for higher education and, consequently, to the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area.

Findings

2.1 The design and approval of new programmes at DI is guided by the New Programme and Delivery Policy. A new programme proposal may be initiated by the academic faculty/programme dean or by the instructions of the Board of Trustees. Prior to formalising a detailed proposal, a pre-approval is required by the Dean of School, the Council, and the Board of Trustees. Due to the specific mission of the Institute, DI is selective in its programme offerings and there must be a pressing need for a new programme supported by a detailed market study. The goals of a new programme must be aligned with the DI mission and vision which is demonstrated by a sample of programme proposals.

2.2 OIEQA has developed a programme proposal template which includes but is not limited to rationale, an analysis of student and employer needs. The template also includes sections about human and physical resources, facilities, finances, and other requirements.

2.3 The completed proposal is reviewed internally by members of OIEQA, the School Council chaired by the Dean, the DI Council and finally the Board of Trustees (BOT). DI engages external peer reviewers both nationally and internationally. Peer reviewers provide feedback on programme structure, curriculum contents and detailed syllabi before the proposal is presented for approval to the BOT and the Ministry. A sample of three graduate programme proposals (MSc Critical Security Studies, MA Human Rights and Executive Master of Arts Diplomatic Studies and International Cooperation) was reviewed in detail. Evidence reveals that programme proposals follow the policy and guidelines and have been reviewed and approved by relevant institutional bodies as well as the Ministry.

2.4 Each programme has Programme Learning Outcomes (PLOs) and a description of their assessment. The PLOs are aligned with the FHEQ of a Level 7 degree. Additionally, PLOs must be measurable and 'categorized under knowledge and understanding, intellectual skills, practical skills, and transferrable/key skills'. Examples of self-study reports submitted for accreditation to other agencies revealed that PLOs are clearly defined and included mapping between PLOs and student assessments. DI engaged external experts to review the curricula prior to submitting the proposal for approval for accreditation. This serves as additional assurance that PLOs meet set requirements.

2.5 DI captures and considers feedback from alumni and employers through surveys when designing new programmes. Survey results are part of the programme feasibility study. Students are part of formal institute committees, and student views are also captured through several surveys.

2.6 The review team noted that the New Programme and Delivery Policy was approved in 2015 and has not been reviewed since. DI assured the team it would review the policy and include oversight of the process for new programme development and approval by the OIEQA. The review team identified policy reviews as a thematic finding as mentioned in paragraph 1.15 in section 1.1.

2.7 After Ministry approval, the programme is marketed for student recruitment and necessary resources are procured and monitored by the Executive Director of Administrative and Financial Division, in collaboration with the Deans and relevant departments. The programme proposal also includes a risk assessment and mitigation plan.

2.8 DI specialises in offering a niche programme portfolio that is closely aligned with its mission as well as the State of Qatar National Framework. Programmes such as Executive Master of Diplomatic Studies and International Cooperation, Critical Security Studies, and Human Rights Studies are unique in the country and the Arab Region. In addition, DI is planning to offer Master's in Heritage and Cultural Management which will become another unique programme. The review team identifies the programme offering at DI as **good practice** as it has a broad socio-cultural impact on the State of Qatar and the Arab Region.

2.9 DI maintains a Programme Closure Policy to protect and safeguard students' interests and to assure academic accommodation for students in case of a programme closure. The SED reports that to date no programmes have been closed.

2.10 Overall, the team concludes that DI has a strong framework for the design and approval of programmes which meets national needs and regulatory requirements of the Ministry, in addition to international benchmarks. The meetings with the leadership team, faculty, staff and students confirmed a common understanding of the processes by all, therefore, the review team concludes that Standard 1.2 is **met**.

Standard 1.3 Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment

Institutions should ensure that the programmes are delivered in a way that encourages students to take an active role in creating the learning process, and that the assessment of students reflects this approach.

Findings

3.1 DI has established the Office of Teaching, Learning and Assessment (OTLA) to support a strategic approach to student-centred teaching and learning. OTLA provides support by offering numerous activities to faculty and staff throughout the year. The training and development offered by OTLA includes approaches to teaching and learning; course development; advising on assessment and evaluation; action research in education; and graduate teacher development. Meetings with the faculty and staff confirmed the strong support received from OTLA throughout the year.

3.2 OTLA has developed Standards of Teaching Quality that contribute to the implementation of DI strategic approaches and ensure key aims are maintained. The Standards of Teaching Quality support the mission, mandate and strategic goals of the Institute and are aligned with the Higher Education Academy (HEA) Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF) and other international frameworks for teaching quality.

3.3 Meetings with faculty and students confirmed that a variety of methods and techniques such as case-study discussions, seminars by guest speakers and group assignments are employed to support students' learning. Students are engaged in various activities, in and out of the classroom, which reflect the specific course or programme. Students shared experiences of visiting other countries as part of the Master's in Conflict Management.

3.4 DI offers flexibility in terms of timings, offerings, mode of delivery and intensive mode of education. For professionals, classes are conducted in the evening as well as at weekends. Students can opt for full-time and part-time options depending on their circumstances. They are also offered a wide range of electives to choose from. For some programmes, such as Psychology, students can choose a specialised field from the offered specialisations of Clinical Psychology or Social Psychology. Executive master's programmes are offered to working professionals in an intensive learning mode and can be completed within 18 to 20 months.

3.5 DI has a small student population that aligns with its mission and scope. The student-to-faculty ratio is 6:1 for all postgraduate programmes whereas the student-to-advisor ratio is 7:1. The meeting with students revealed that they receive extensive advice and support. The review team finds that the strategic and substantial investment in human capital which significantly impacts the student-staff ratio of 6:1 and ensures provision of student-centred teaching and learning is **good practice**.

3.6 Faculty use a variety of instructional strategies including face-to-face delivery, hybrid teaching and online delivery of classes. DI uses the MOODLE Learning Management System to deliver online and hybrid classes. Faculty employ a variety of teaching techniques such as lectures, group work, classroom discussions, projects, and field visits.

3.7 During the COVID-19 pandemic, DI managed to continue its teaching and learning operation smoothly through online delivery. DI has invested heavily in tools for online learning such as Cisco WebEx videoconferencing software which is integrated with the DI systems. This allows students access to records, storage, and retrieval of classroom lectures

in a secure environment. A blended approach is in place with some classes online and others face-to-face depending on the specific topic and course.

3.8 Students are offered opportunities to engage in an internship during their studies. It is mandatory to complete an internship, in case they hold no relevant experience, in all master's programmes in SEAPP except the Executive Master's in Public Administration (MPA). In SOSH, an internship is mandatory for Psychology; Social Work; and Journalism; and optional for the Media and Cultural Studies, and Conflict Management and Humanitarian Action. The meeting with alumni and employers made clear that students value their experience and had gained the necessary training and competencies during the internship.

3.9 Student assessment is guided by the Assessment and Examination Policy; Grading Policy; and master's Thesis Policy. Types of assessments at DI vary and include 'essays, book reviews, reaction papers, oral reports/presentations, simulations, reading summary reports, case study analyses, research/term projects/papers, online discussion board posts (asynchronous), logbooks/learning logs, reflective journal/reflective diaries, video montages, internship reports, field reports, capstone project, quizzes, mid-term exams, final exams, and theses'. Sample course syllabi reviewed affirmed that these included guidelines and requirements for student assessments including marking criteria.

3.10 For some programmes, students can opt for a Capstone Project in place of the thesis requirement and in such cases, a Capstone Project is supplemented with a course. All Capstone Projects and Theses are double marked, and DI has further pledged to introduce the assessment rubrics to promote consistency and transparency.

3.11 Academic integrity is enforced through the Academic Integrity Policy and all student assignments are monitored using Turnitin or iThenticate software to detect plagiarism.

3.12 The review of assessments in some courses showed that students are provided feedback on first drafts of submitted work for further review and improvement. This has contributed on some occasions to the inflation of student grades. The grade analysis reports show a high proportion of students received an A or an A-(minus) grade (51.3% of all grades awarded in Autumn 2021 were A or A-). The meeting with faculty revealed an inconsistency in the implementation of assessment policy and that faculty often decided the number of times students could receive feedback before a final grade was awarded. This poses a risk that marking practices may be inequitable across the Institute. The review team **recommends** that DI formulates a consistent and institute-wide approach toward qualitative feedback which supports student development.

3.13 As a postgraduate institution, DI encourages students to contribute to research. Students are engaged with faculty in co-authoring high-quality research publications. Faculty are strongly encouraged to publish research in high-quality journals and are provided with the necessary support, including financial support, to publish. Moreover, research and publications are taken into account in faculty appointments, contract renewals and promotions.

3.14 DI promotes mutual respect in the learner-teacher relationship by promoting mutual trust and engagement through formal and informal meetings and periodic feedback surveys from students.

3.15 DI employs various surveys to obtain student feedback on teaching, learning and assessment and the results of these surveys are used to make improvements on a continuous basis.

3.16 The review team concludes that delivery of programmes at DI encourages students to be active learners and the assessment process supports this approach with some further

improvements as recommended above. Therefore, the active role of students in creating learning processes and assessment reflects this approach and Standard 1.3 is **met**.

Standard 1.4 Student admission, progression, recognition and certification

Institutions should consistently apply pre-defined and published regulations covering all phases of the student "life cycle", e.g. student admission, progression, recognition and certification.

Findings

4.1 DI has an Admissions Policy in place which is mapped to Qatari national priorities and Government requirements. The policy sets out the DI principles and processes for admission of students. Specific entry criteria are set at programme level and made available through the website. Applicants are required to submit prior academic transcripts, which are subject to evaluation before attending a subsequent interview. Students are permitted to appeal admission decisions, the process for which is set out in the Admissions Policy. The Admissions Department processes appeals in consultation with the Head of Programme and informs the appellant of the outcome.

4.2 The Institute has an established Credit Transfer Policy. Applications are made to the Office of Admission, Registration and Student Affairs. Applications are assessed and recommended to the Dean who makes the final decision. The Institute has also produced a Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications.

4.3 The Office of Admission, Registration and Student Affairs are responsible for organising information sessions, recruitment events and workshops, as well as answering applicant queries and contacting admitted students to ascertain whether they require additional support due to disability or for any other reason.

4.4 Oversight of the admissions process and decision-making is maintained through the Admission Programme Meeting. Detailed records of consideration and deliberations are taken at meetings, with a template agenda used to ensure consistency. The Institute has also developed an Admission Evaluation Process and Workflow document to support staff involved in the admission process.

4.5 The Institute operates a YouTube channel designed to support recruitment, admission, and induction. Students are involved in developing content, which includes videos covering policies and procedures that are pertinent to student induction. The Institute monitors data analytics relating to the channel to understand how it is being used. The Institute delivers a mandatory, week-long orientation programme that includes presentations from the President, Dean of Student Affairs and alumni as well as presentations from academic and support staff. The team found that the comprehensive orientation programme in place for new students included sessions on the library, student services, policies and procedures and an introduction to courses. The mandatory orientation programme helps ensure that all students benefit from the same baseline introduction to the Institute.

4.6 The Registration Team within the Office of Admission, Registration and Student Affairs monitors progression each semester, communicating outcomes to students. Academic advisors play a key role in aiding student progression through student-focused support provided throughout the year. The scheme is governed by an Academic Advising Policy and the Institute informed the team that it has recently been revised in order to ensure programmes are more engaged with academic advising reflecting their detailed understanding of students within their academic discipline. Advisors can extract academic advising reports from the student information system which enable them to review a student's GPA, courses and others' notes regarding progression.

4.7 The Registration Team oversees student academic records and is responsible for issuing certificates and transcripts when a student has met the requirements of their programme.

4.8 The team found that staff possess a comprehensive understanding of the Admissions Policy, which is consistently applied. The Office of Admission, Registration and Student Affairs help to ensure the consistent application of the policy by maintaining the Admission and Evaluation Process Workflow and ensuring that it is operationalised. Students confirmed that the admissions process was clear, fair, and responsive.

4.9 The team was provided with evidence of a successful admissions appeal demonstrating that the process works in practice. In particular, the team found that the admission support for international students enhanced the student experience. The Institute adopts a flexible and considerate approach that recognises the number of prospective students applying from conflict zones. International applicants, especially from conflict zones, may face challenges such as internet connection, ability to attend scheduled online interviews due to safety concerns, and the availability of required documentation such as high school transcripts. Meetings with staff and students demonstrated high levels of personal attention and care that ensured students found the process supportive. These arrangements contribute to overall support for international students discussed in more detail under Standard 1.6.

4.10 The team determined that the Academic Advising scheme operates effectively. Students are aware of assigned advisors and confirm they have regular access to discuss progress and challenges. Advisors complete template forms that are assigned to the students' record, which have recently been digitised to aid ease of access for staff and students. Both can review notes and guidance. Student data demonstrates that the retention has remained above 84.5% between 2015 and 2021.

4.11 Copies of certificates and transcripts clearly state the location of study, language of delivery, credits accumulated, and award issued. Students also informed the team that where they require transcripts issued quicker than usual to apply for further study programmes, the Institute was responsive.

4.12 The review team concludes that the policies and processes pertaining to student admission, progression, recognition and certification are appropriate, consistently applied and align with Standard 1.4, which is therefore **met**.

Standard 1.5 Teaching staff

Institutions should assure themselves of the competence of their teachers. They should apply fair and transparent processes for the recruitment and development of the staff.

Findings

5.1 DI Faculty Bylaws govern the rules and procedures related to academic appointments; rank assignments; extensions; promotions; and teaching workload. The policies and procedures for recruitment and employee classification are detailed in the Employee Handbook which is available to all faculty.

5.2 Faculty at DI are multi-national at all ranks (Professors; Associate Professors; Assistant Professors; Senior Lecturers; Lecturers; Instructors and Research; and Teaching Assistants). All faculty holding Assistant Professor or above rank have a doctoral degree in a relevant field. Faculty composition is diverse with over 23 nationalities from different parts of the world including Australia; Europe; Middle East including Qatar; North America; and the UK. In terms of diversity by gender, DI employs 40% female faculty which has grown from 27% in the preceding year.

5.3 Faculty recruitment administration is handled by the Human Resources Department, alongside Schools, under the supervision of the President. The Human Resource Department advertises academic positions on the DI website and other venues and collects applications which are forwarded to the relevant Dean of the School. A programme Recruitment Committee comprising academics from the Schools is constituted to shortlist the candidates for interviews. Following the interview, the recommendation for appointment, or otherwise, is made by the Dean and submitted to the Provost and President for final approval.

5.4 It is stated in the SED that DI chooses the most suitable candidate based on merit and equality to assure an equal and fair opportunity for all applicants.

5.5 Faculty positions are not tenure tracked or permanent. However, DI offers multi-year rolling contracts to a small number of faculty (15%) who are exceptional in teaching and research and the remaining faculty (85%) are offered a normal contract of three, two or one-year duration. Faculty are offered the necessary guidance and support to prepare for promotion to the next professorial rank. Faculty who hold an assistant professorship must apply for promotion after six years to the associate professor rank; whereas associate professors can serve for 10 years before they are required to apply for promotion to the full professorship rank. All promotions are performance-based.

5.6 Opportunities for professional development and faculty growth are provided. The training needs are identified through annual appraisals and surveys and faculty are provided access to the LinkedIn Learning platform for professional development. The Teaching, Learning and assessment (TLA) Committee guides the OTLA that offers/implements a broad range of professional development programmes/workshops for the faculty.

5.7 Faculty are expected to contribute to three areas - research activities, teaching, and community service. DI carries out an annual performance review and faculty are required to complete the self-assessment form which contains detailed information about these three areas. Student feedback on teaching and learning through surveys is also considered as part of the annual performance review.

5.8 DI appoints Research and Teaching Assistants (RTAs) for a specific academic programme under supervision of the faculty. RTAs receive training and development in research, teaching, and administration skills. There is an opportunity for successful RTAs to continue onto a doctoral programme.

5.9 Research is central to DI activities and as a research-intensive postgraduate institution, each faculty is allocated 18,250 Qatari Riyal (approximately 5,000 US dollars) annually for research and related activities, including attending international conferences, fieldwork, and publication costs. Faculty are also encouraged to seek research grants from external sources. DI offers sabbatical leave to support faculty to carry out research and scholarly work, which is unique in the Arab Region. Since its inception in 2015, DI faculty has managed to publish 512 peer-reviewed publications. During meetings the team found that faculty are actively encouraged to co-publish with students. This unique faculty and student collaboration has resulted in a significant number of peer-reviewed publications (512 publications since 2015) despite a very small student population. The review team finds DI faculty commitment to publishing in high-quality peer-reviewed journals involving students is **good practice**.

5.10 The review team concludes that DI has managed to attract, recruit, retain and develop a strong faculty that is committed to its mission of teaching, learning and quality research. Therefore, Standard 1.5 Teaching Staff is **met**.

Standard 1.6 Learning resources and student support

Institutions should have appropriate funding for learning and teaching activities and ensure that adequate and readily accessible learning resources and student support are provided.

Findings

6.1 The Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies (ACRPS) founded DI and continues to commit to providing the necessary funding for learning resources and student support. At the end of each academic year, all academic and administrative units complete a financial template which specifies budget needs based on their future operational plans and analysis of the previous year's expenditure in detail. Each programme has an allocated budget for library resources, as well as funds to support guest speakers, workshops, and field trips.

6.2 The Institute has two principal scholarships for students. The Tamim Scholarship, which is awarded based on prior academic achievement and the Sanad Scholarship. The latter is offered to all international students and includes tuition, on-campus housing, a monthly stipend, reimbursement of public health insurance fees, airfare to and from students' home countries, and subsidised transportation. These scholarships, together with other forms of financial support such as sponsorship options and the Student Fieldwork Research Fund, are outlined in the Student Handbook.

6.3 The Institute campus consists of 23 different buildings, which contain 15 classrooms, three auditoriums, five conference rooms and two computer laboratories. Classrooms are equipped to support hybrid and interactive learning for 15 to 25 students. One computer laboratory provides general access to 20 workstations, while the other has 15 stations and supports the Institute Media and Cultural Studies cohort. It provides relevant journalism and media software. The Institute premises were developed based on a Facilities Department Improvement Plan.

6.4 The virtual learning environment (VLE) is integrated with the Student Information System (SIS). The Institute has developed minimum requirements for the VLE, which include course syllabus, staff research profiles, statements of teaching philosophy, week-by-week content, assigned weekly readings and a link to the assignment submission portal. During the pandemic, the Institute developed an interface with video meeting software to enable student access to the virtual classroom. The Institute monitors engagement with the VLE through its Moodle Usage Report.

6.5 The library has a book collection in excess of 80,000 copies and volumes, which includes 2,911 ebooks, 461 Doha Institute dissertations and 4,180 serials and reports. The Institute also has a partnership agreement in place with the Qatar National Library. This provides students overall access to a collection with 257 databases and over 500,000 ebooks and periodicals. The library has eight full-time employees, including five with library science degrees. Opening hours are extended during exam periods.

6.6 Teaching staff maintain bookable office hours where students can seek support for academic advice. The Academic Advising Policy details the role and responsibilities of the Registrar's Office, academic advisors, and students, to ensure a formalised approach to supporting student success. As detailed under Standard 1.4, the Institute has an Academic Advising Form in place to enable record keeping through the SIS. Academic advising is also subject to a monitoring report.

6.7 Although delivery is in Arabic, students are required to speak English as they use English language learning resources. Support is provided through the Language Center and includes sessions on preparation for IETLS and TOEFL, strategic academic writing, thesis formulation, and the development of cohesive arguments. The Center also runs a writing clinic.

6.8 The Institute developed a central Careers Services Unit in 2018-19 which provides workshops for students on CV writing, preparation for job interviews and internships, and employability skills. The service also informs students about job openings, internships, and research opportunities.

6.9 The Psychological Counsellor offers workshops and group sessions on topics that include Self-Care and Stress Management, Dealing with Test Anxiety, Overcoming Loneliness and Motivation and Procrastination. Students have health insurance included as part of their scholarships and the Institute employs a nurse during weekdays for any sudden health issues.

6.10 The Institute has a wide range of leisure and social facilities on campus including tennis, football, squash, basketball and a gaming area. The elected Student Council are responsible for organising clubs and cultural activities on campus.

6.11 The team found that support for international students is driven by an explicit strategic approach, recognising that the DI students are primarily international, with a significant proportion recruited from conflict zones. Consequently resources, support and teaching activities need to be reflective not just of the Qatari national context but global circumstance and requirements. The Institute considers its graduates must have the non-academic and academic skills to be competent in global environments and an international employment market. The team determined that support arrangements for international students are clearly informed by this strategy. For instance, the Institute builds on the admissions practice outlined under Standard 1.4 to ensure that individual and group counselling sessions are made available for students arriving from conflict zones, financial support is provided to students to purchase equipment where transporting this from their home country was not possible and the Institute runs a programme on cultural expectations and adjustment. This commitment is also reflected and supported through the provision of field trips and training that takes place in conflict zones including Sudan, Jordan and Gaza. Students commented to the team that this enables them to develop practical skills and relevant knowledge that can be applied to Arab contexts, thus supporting the Institute's founding mission. The review team therefore determined that the comprehensive and effective support and arrangement for international students, especially for students recruited from conflict zones represents **good practice**.

6.12 Students confirmed high levels of satisfaction with the range of support available to them, including psychological, careers, language, and IT support. Students can access support in-person and online. To assist with off-campus access the Institute provided students with financial support to upgrade internet access at home during the pandemic. The team found that the provision of accessible and responsive specialist support which is available to students either virtually or in-person and positively impacts the experience of students is therefore considered **good practice**.

6.13 The team found that the Facilities Department Improvement Plan had been comprehensively and effectively implemented. Students benefit from a high-quality, physical learning environment, complemented by equally high-quality equipment, including the clinical psychology and journalism laboratories. Students have access to an extensive range of library resources and social learning spaces, especially impressive given the size of the current student population. The Institute has recently doubled its physical shelving and

hardcopy resources. Students reported satisfaction that they are also able to make use of a broad range of social facilities incorporating indoor and outdoor swimming pools, squash courts and common rooms. Therefore, the team concludes that the extensive range of learning resources and high-quality physical environment constitutes **good practice**.

6.14 Current work to draft the DI strategic priorities for 2023-28 demonstrates a continued focus on enhancing student support, through objectives including increasing the library electronic and physical resources, building students' digital capabilities, and strengthening IT resources.

6.15 The review team concludes that the Institute provides appropriate funding for learning and teaching activities and ensures that there are adequate and readily accessible learning resources and student support provided, therefore Standard 1.6 is **met**.

Standard 1.7 Information management

Institutions should ensure that they collect, analyse and use relevant information for the effective management of their programmes and other activities.

Findings

7.1 DI operates a comprehensive information management system that supports overall data collection, analysis and monitoring arrangements for quality assurance and enhancement of programmes and institute activities. The systems contain several components that support admissions, analysis of student data, library, and IT systems.

7.2 DI makes use of Moodle (for teaching, learning and assessment), SharePoint, People Soft Campus solutions (student information system), Kaltura (lecture recording), Survey tools (Survey Monkey and Qualtrics), SPSS (statistical software), Sierra (Library Management system).

7.3 Data is collected and analysed to support the monitoring of application processes, academic performance, employability, issues reported on the service management tool, staff, and student satisfaction. Office and departmental data is also made available to measure satisfaction against performance and KPIs. The OIEQA takes an important overarching responsibility in managing and processing all of DI information and data.

7.4 Furthermore, it was established during the meetings that strategic oversight of quality assurance in maintaining the variety of information management systems is the responsibility of the Office of Planning, Development and Documentation (OPDD). OPDD is responsible for collating and monitoring information across DI and feedback mechanisms. For example, OPDD also gathers and shares information with the Ministry, employers, associations and government bodies.

7.5 The People Soft Campus Solution for SIS has been implemented in stages since 2015 and is used for admissions, enrolment, scheduling, attendance, grading, transcripts, and graduation. It also holds all academic records from prospective students to graduates. Only authorised personnel have access to student records (role based). This access is analysed by the data custodian and approved by the data owner.

7.6 Data is stored securely and managed through Student Information System (SIS); the system is hosted behind next-generation firewalls and access is monitored through Security Incident and Event Management (SIEM).

7.7 Mid-year and annual reports are produced to report School activities that took place throughout the year and to inform DI governance reports.

7.8 The Office of Admission, Registration, Student Affairs (OARS) is responsible for the SIS. OARS provides a comprehensive report on activities for DI and supports departments and offices with short reports throughout the year. The reports include admissions and applicant details; recruitment and applicant conversion activities; timetabling preparations; achievement, retention and attainment data; graduation; outreach activities and operational details.

7.9 Moreover, the team found that both OARS and OIEQA support departmental requirements for data management and analytics, which are relevant to KPIs as these are very important in the design of new policies and procedures including raising awareness across departments in terms of IEQA at DI. There are also online resources for development and training of staff.

7.10 The team established that all academic and administrative units have a dashboard that is applicable to them with the information reflecting specific needs and contexts. The Registration and IT Departments are responsible for maintaining dashboards. They also have a new system that captures the processes faculty use to manage programmes. It contains records for students; teaching; materials; attendance; grades; and employability statistics. This integrated system is linked to the Registration Department due to the level of information which is shared between students and staff and faculty. During the meeting with Senior Management staff, it was established that a proactive approach is embedded which encourages faculty to engage and own the processes and not burden them with the administration of data.

7.11 DI employs a range of surveys to gather data and feedback such as student course surveys; student satisfaction surveys; and a student satisfaction summary report all of which inform OIEQA actions. Alumni surveys and an alumni satisfaction summary report are carried out to keep in touch with graduates, seek feedback on the improvement of programmes and processes, and to inform postgraduate careers information. During the review visit, alumni and students told the team how useful the integrated approach to collecting information was in supporting student learning journeys, internships and employability aspects. Similar views were shared by the employer partners who met with the review team. The review team received a demonstration of the internal Management Information System (MIS) through dashboards and reporting systems to enhance academic and administrative practices which confirmed the interconnectedness.

7.12 The review team concludes that DI makes timely collection, processing and secure management of all information. This is followed by analysis and impactful use of relevant information for the effective management of their programmes and other activities, ensuring its alignment with the requirements of Standard 1.7, which is therefore **met**.

Standard 1.8 Public information

Institutions should publish information about their activities, including programmes, which is clear, accurate, objective, up-to date and readily accessible.

Findings

8.1 The primary source of public information about the Institute is the DI website. The website publishes its mission, academic ethos, governance structure and history. Information about academic programmes, academic calendar, admissions, academic policies, support services, and the campus is also available. Specific programme pages include the qualification, mission, entry requirements, study plans, courses, programme learning outcomes, instructors' profiles, career paths, and credit hours. The institution also launched a YouTube channel in 2019 to promote the student experience and campus life to prospective students.

8.2 Support for students from disadvantaged backgrounds and for students with special needs is outlined and dedicated offices and departments respond to queries to allow students to fully understand how they can make use of facilities and what reasonable adjustments can be accommodated.

8.3 The Institute launched a subsite in 2022-23 to cover its Doctoral Studies. This provides public information on the Board of Doctoral Studies, programmes of study offered, programme structure, study plans, the Doctoral Studies Handbook and information on application; and admission dates.

8.4 To ensure information remains accurate and fit-for-purpose the Institute developed a Framework for Handling Public Information that addresses ownership, approval, and monitoring arrangements. Each School and Center is responsible for ensuring that its information is up to date, clear, and accurate, as detailed in the policy. The web master in the Communication and External Relations Department is responsible for liaising with Schools and programmes to keep the respective content updated as specified in the Framework, which also covers printed and social media information. The Framework provides a detailed breakdown of data owners, who are responsible for ensuring content is up to date, and data custodians who must ensure the information is consistent, properly structured and fit for purpose for the intended audience. In addition, the Institute established a Website Committee in 2017 to ensure continuous improvement and enhancement of the Institute's online presence.

8.5 The team determined that information housed on the website and that available through handbooks and other published material is accurate and up to date. Although the Institute does not make programme specifications available in their entirety, DI actively ensures that salient programme information is made available to stakeholders, which was confirmed by students who found information to be clear and accessible.

8.6 Notwithstanding that students were satisfied with the Institute's public information, the provider itself has identified the need to improve the website so it is more accessible to students with special needs. This work is currently underway using external expertise to inform the approach. External stakeholders, including employers, identified scope to be provided with more comprehensive information regarding the extent of DI activities and how employers could become involved, as discussed further under Standard 1.9. In seeking to address this challenge, DI may benefit from reflecting on the published information which it produces, not just for prospective students but for the broadest possible range of stakeholders.

8.7 Overall, staff were familiar with the Framework for Public Information and possessed a clear understanding of responsibilities for producing, publishing, and monitoring public information.

8.8 The Institute provides information about its activities and programmes to students and other stakeholders that is clear, accurate, objective, up to date and readily accessible. Therefore, the team concludes that Standard 1.8 is **met**.

Standard 1.9 Ongoing monitoring and periodic review of programmes

Institutions should monitor and periodically review their programmes to ensure that they achieve the objectives set for them and respond to the needs of students and society. These reviews should lead to continuous improvement of the programme. Any action planned or taken as a result should be communicated to all those concerned.

Findings

9.1 The Programme Monitoring, Assessment and Review Policy governs the monitoring and periodic review of programmes, with Heads of Programme responsible for its implementation. The policy specifies definitions for monitoring, assessment and review, and the tools to support the process, such as programme specification, programme and course files and feedback tools. Furthermore, ongoing monitoring of programmes is a continuous priority across DI to maintain oversight of its academic provision, including professional statutory and regulatory bodies and external accreditation.

9.2 The team found that a range of materials supporting relevant academic teams and administrative services are in place to support ongoing monitoring and periodic review. For example, in addition to programme specifications, programme files contain course materials (course files), assessment surveys, annual programme assessment, student theses and programme accreditation details (where appropriate).

9.3 Course files include the syllabus, assessment instruments, representative sample of graded student work, teaching materials, student, and instructor evaluations. During the meeting with academic staff, it was evident that this repository of useful information and documentation has been beneficial to review course health and implement continuous improvement to enhance students' learning.

9.4 DI collects student feedback throughout the year including through student fora. Decision no 040/2018 sets out duties of the Student-Faculty Forums. During the meeting with students, the team heard about changes actioned as part of the feedback process. For example, when a change is proposed by students, it is considered, and the class is consulted before a decision is made by relevant academic teams and support services. For example, an exam was moved because of work-related travel and the class in question was happy to move the exam once consulted. A sense of community was evident among students, academic staff, and the services team, perhaps benefiting from the smaller class numbers making the level and ease of communication, and continuous healthy relationships.

9.5 The team was provided with another example demonstrating swift action in relation to student feedback through the additional provision of English writing sessions. For a lot of students, where English is not the native language, particularly from an academic perspective, this session helped them with writing skills and also illustrated how to avoid plagiarism while completing assessments. Student feedback had also led to splitting of course content across two units to allow more focus and deep learning for students.

9.6 The Provost Feedback Report on Student-Faculty Forums lists a number of issues raised by students such as course content; modes of teaching; research methods and relation to the course syllabi; depth-lacking vs in-depth teaching; assignment workload etc. It states that minutes of meetings and feedback are to be circulated to students. The review team established that there is a reflective process and a collection of evidence over time which is benchmarked against the learning outcomes, assessment and teaching pedagogies.

9.7 The team found that the programmes complete an Annual Programme Assessment Report which is discussed with School Deans. OIEQA and OTLA provide feedback and support to programmes for development. The outcome of all programme reports contributes to the School Annual Report.

9.8 The External Periodic Review is carried out through self-study and is prepared according to standards by accrediting bodies. The frequency of reviews is set by accrediting bodies. External accreditation is a requirement for all programmes, a strategic decision of the DI Board of Trustees. This element is further documented in the report for standard 1.10.

9.9 The team noted an overall agile and impactful approach to student feedback, which contributes to a positive change in the student learning experience, is **good practice** across the Institute. The team found that DI would benefit from formal and explicit involvement of employers and alumni in quality assurance and enhancement processes which support the forthcoming strategic vision 2023-28, also aligned with The State of Qatar National Vision 2030.

9.10 The review team concludes that DI monitors and periodically reviews its programmes to ensure that they achieve set objectives and proactively respond to the needs of students and society. The continuous improvement of programmes through robust and agile continuous monitoring and review is evident, ensuring alignment with the requirements of Standard 1.9, which is therefore **met**.

Standard 1.10 Cyclical external quality assurance

Institutions should undergo external quality assurance in line with the ESG on a cyclical basis.

Findings

10.1 DI is required to undergo institutional relicensing every five years. Most recently DI was relicensed in May 2021 with the next review taking place in 2026.

10.2 Moreover, DI actively seeks international accreditations for its programmes, on a voluntary basis emphasising its value-added offer. In this context, DI has four accredited programmes, three programmes with pending accreditation for which the formal reports are awaited, and a further seven programmes in the process of completing their self-study for submission in Spring 2022. Most programmes do not relate to specific accreditation bodies and are applying to the Foundation for International Business Administration Accreditation (FIBAA) for accreditation.

10.3 The team established that, where discipline-specific accrediting bodies exist, DI aims to seek accreditation, such as with NASPAA which accredits programmes in public policy, affairs and administration and, most recently, the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (ACEJMC) which accredits journalism and mass communication programmes.

10.4 The team established that DI strives to achieve programme-level academic excellence through robust internal quality mechanisms and external internationally recognised derivatives in the form of accreditations. The team believes that, although international accreditation is not mandatory and not stipulated by the Ministry, the DI Board of Trustees has made the strategic decision that external endorsement is part of quality assurance and a continuous monitoring process at DI. It also forms part of the strategic plan, second strategic planning cycle: 2018-23. Furthermore, in the meeting with academic staff, it was apparent that each programme team views international accreditation as an important mechanism to maintain the currency of programmes, and equally to assure validity in a dynamic higher education landscape.

10.5 Academic staff and management teams at DI are proud to achieve international programme accreditations and feel it to be a niche offering for DI students. DI staff were forthcoming at meetings during the review visit and provided examples of how associating programmes with an international accreditation aids evaluation of the quality of programme learning, teaching and assessment approaches and equally support services. It is understood that such processes complement internal quality assurance and enhancement practices of DI.

10.6 Employers and alumni told the review team that feedback is taken, considered and used to implement transformational change as well as assure quality of learning. An employer added that a service unit which had solved a problem for an employer also fed back to the employer on the specifics of the solution implemented to resolve the issue raised. DI works closely with the Employers and Alumni Office to design and execute internships.

10.7 DI has been preparing for QAA International Quality Review (IQR) since 2017. The rationale for this was the QAA alignment with the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG) which are considered flexible and adaptable to different models of higher education. DI found the process of preparing for IQR helpful in identifying institutional developments and to inform institutional action planning. The team found the Institute's assessment of ESG

compliance was conducted at different levels such as the OIEQA and the IEQA Committee, but more importantly also at the level of the DI community through different means such as workshops and retreats.

10.8 The review team found that OIEQA leads on all external accreditations and relevant compliance including identification of actions and supporting academic teams. The commitment to improving quality teaching, learning, and assessment practices through external periodic review, including international accreditation for every programme is considered **good practice**. It also aligns the vision of DI to continuously improve the overall quality assurance and enhancement of the Institute and its programmes.

10.9 The review team concludes that DI is committed to continuous external quality assurance in line with ESG on a cyclical basis, ensuring its alignment with the requirements of Standard 1.10, which is therefore **met**.

Glossary

Action plan

A plan developed by the institution after the QAA review report has been published, which is signed off by the head of the institution. It responds to the recommendations in the report and gives any plans to capitalise on the identified good practice.

Annual monitoring

Checking a process or activity every year to see whether it meets expectations for standards and quality. Annual reports normally include information about student achievements and may comment on the evaluation of courses and modules.

Collaborative arrangement

A formal arrangement between a degree-awarding body and another higher education provider. These may be degree-awarding bodies with which the institution collaborates to deliver higher education qualifications on behalf of the degree-awarding bodies.

Alternatively, they may be other delivery organisations who deliver part or all of a proportion of the institution's higher education programmes.

Condition

Conditions set out action that is required. Conditions are only used with unsatisfactory judgements where the quality cannot be approved. Conditions may be used where quality or standards are at risk/continuing risk if action is not taken or if a required standard is not met and action is needed for it to be met.

Degree-awarding body

Institutions that have authority, for example from a national agency, to issue their own awards. Institutions applying to IQR may be degree-awarding bodies themselves, or may collaborate to deliver higher education qualifications on behalf of degree-awarding bodies.

Desk-based analysis

An analysis by the review team of evidence, submitted by the institution, that enables the review team to identify its initial findings and subsequently supports the review team as it develops its review findings.

Enhancement

See **quality enhancement**.

European Standards and Guidelines

For details, including the full text on each standard, see www.enqa.eu/index.php/home/esg.

Examples of practice

A list of policies and practices that a review team may use when considering the extent to which an institution meets the standards for review. The examples should be considered as a guide only, in acknowledgment that not all of them will be appropriate for all institutions.

Externality

The use of experts from outside a higher education provider, such as external examiners or external advisers, to assist in quality assurance procedures.

Facilitator

The member of staff identified by the institution to act as the principal point of contact for the QAA officer and who will be available during the review visit, to assist with any questions or requests for additional documentation.

Good practice

A feature of good practice is a process or way of working that, in the view of a QAA review team, makes a particularly positive contribution to the institution's higher education provision.

Lead student representative

An optional voluntary role that is designed to allow students at the institution applying for IQR to play a central part in the organisation of the review.

Oversight

Objective scrutiny, monitoring and quality assurance of educational provision.

Peer reviewers

Members of the review team who make the decisions in relation to the review of the institution. Peer reviewers have experience of managing quality and academic standards in higher education or have recent experience of being a student in higher education.

Periodic review

An internal review of one or more programmes of study, undertaken by institutions periodically (typically once every five years), using nationally agreed reference points, to confirm that the programmes are of an appropriate academic standard and quality. The process typically involves experts from other higher education providers. It covers areas such as the continuing relevance of the programme, the currency of the curriculum and reference materials, the employability of graduates and the overall performance of students. Periodic review is one of the main processes whereby institutions can continue to assure themselves about the academic quality and standards of their awards.

Programme of study

An approved course of study that provides a coherent learning experience and normally leads to a qualification. UK higher education programmes must be approved and validated by UK degree-awarding bodies.

Quality enhancement

The process by which higher education providers systematically improve the quality of provision and the ways in which students' learning is supported.

QAA officer

The person appointed by QAA to manage the review programme and to act as the liaison between the review team and the institution.

Quality assurance

The systematic monitoring and evaluation of learning and teaching, and the processes that support them, to make sure that the standards of academic awards meet the necessary standards, and that the quality of the student learning experience is being safeguarded and improved.

Recognition of prior learning

Assessing previous learning that has occurred in any of a range of contexts including school, college and university, and/or through life and work experiences.

Recommendation

Review teams make recommendations where they agree that an institution should consider developing or changing a process or a procedure in order to improve the institution's higher education provision.

Reference points

Statements and other publications that establish criteria against which performance can be measured.

Self-evaluation document

A self-evaluation report by an institution. The submission should include information about the institution as well as an assessment of the effectiveness of its quality systems.

Student submission

A document representing student views that describes what it is like to be a student at the institution, and how students' views are considered in the institution's decision-making and quality assurance processes.

Validation

The process by which an institution ensures that its academic programmes meet expected academic standards and that students will be provided with appropriate learning opportunities. It may also be applied to circumstances where a degree-awarding institution gives approval for its awards to be offered by a partner institution or organisation.

QAA2738 - R13251 - Feb 23

© The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education 2023
Southgate House, Southgate Street, Gloucester GL1 1UB
Registered charity numbers 1062746 and SC037786

Email: accreditation@qaa.ac.uk
Website: www.qaa.ac.uk