



This review method
is ESG-compliant

International Quality Review

Mid-Cycle Review

University of Fiji

Review Report

October 2025

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About this mid-cycle review

This is a report of a mid-cycle review conducted by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) at the University of Fiji. The mid-cycle review included a desk-based analysis and a review visit to the University and was conducted by a team of two reviewers, as follows:

- Dr Julian Ellis
- Mr Matthew Kitching.

The full International Quality Review (IQR) in February 2022, resulted in a [published report](#). The QAA review team concluded that the University of Fiji met all 10 standards set out in Part 1 of the [Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area \(ESG\)](#). The team identified three features of good practice and made fourteen recommendations.

This mid-cycle review evaluates progress against the key actions since the IQR and considers any significant changes that may impact on the ability of University of Fiji to continue to meet the ESG standards.

Mid-cycle review usually takes the form of a desk-based review. In this case the February 2022 IQR, the review visit had to take place virtually due to the Covid pandemic restrictions. This mid-cycle review has therefore included an onsite visit and review of learning resource provision.

Outcome of the mid-cycle review

From the evidence provided, the review team concludes that University of Fiji is making **satisfactory progress** since receiving international accreditation from QAA for 5 years from March 2023 and that the period of validity of the IQR be extended to March 2028.

Summary of IQR outcomes

Overview of the University

1 The University of Fiji (the University) was founded in 2005 as a private higher education University owned by the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha of Fiji. The University is governed and regulated by The University of Fiji Act 2011, to provide local, regional and international post-secondary education. The University is registered with the Fiji Higher Education Commission, for a period of seven years from 2016 to 2023. It is also recognised as a University by the statutory Fiji Higher Education Commission (FHEC), under the premise of the Higher Education Act 2008.

2 The University of Fiji provides five Schools and one Centre which are: Umanand Prasad School of Medicine and Health Sciences; Justice Devendra Pathik School of Law; School of Business and Economics; School of Science and Technology; School of Humanities and Arts; and the Centre for i-Taukei Studies which teaches and promotes indigenous Fijian culture, history and language.

3 The University offers programmes through its Schools and Centre at the Certificate, Diploma, undergraduate and postgraduate levels, in Accounting, Economics, Management, Computing Science, Information Technology, Mathematics, Law, International Relations and Diplomacy (INRD), Medicine, Nursing and Public Health. All programmes have attained recognition, and registration to the FHEC. There are currently 2080 students enrolled at the

University, 83 per cent are undergraduate, 16 per cent postgraduate and 1 per cent PhD students.

Good practice identified by the 2022 International Quality Review

4 The 2022 International Quality Review identified the following good practice:

- The University engages with alumni and external industry stakeholders in the design of their awards and student experience. (ESG Standard 1.2)
- The University encourages innovation in teaching methods and the use of new technologies in teaching. (ESG Standard 1.5)
- The University develops proactive approach to providing a wide range of learning resource and student support, especially during the pandemic. (ESG Standard 1.6)

Recommendations of the 2022 International Quality Review

5 The 2022 International Quality Review resulted in one condition, as follows:

- Build up a holistic and coherent framework of cyclical programme review (ESG Standard 1.9)

6 Following submission of an action plan and additional evidence by The University of Fiji on 20 February 2023, the review team concluded that the condition above had been fulfilled and that all ESG standards were therefore now met.

7 The 2022 International Quality Review also identified the following recommendations:

- Review the University's key quality assurance practices to ensure they include critical analysis and actions to drive continuous improvement. (ESG Standard 1.1)
- Take advantage of existing and readily available resources to develop a more sophisticated understanding and approach to academic integrity. (ESG Standard 1.1)
- Continue its policy drive beyond the Fiji Higher Education Commission to achieve sustainable awards developed in-house to meet an international, as well as emergent, national economic market need. (ESG Standard 1.2)
- Establish an internal independent Moderation Policy and Practice for marking assessments to minimise the perceived risk of the University being accused of biased practices concerning student assessment and attainment. (ESG Standard 1.3)
- Thoroughly address the assessment practices around marking, moderation, use of academic external examiners, and other external reference to other higher education standards to align to international good practice in other higher education systems. (ESG Standard 1.3)
- Expedite senate approval of the Admissions and Grievance Appeals Policy. (ESG Standard 1.4)
- Develop effective monitoring arrangements to ensure that its published regulations for admissions are consistently applied in practice. (ESG Standard 1.4)

- Focus on staff continued professional development (CPD) to address the challenge of post-pandemic digital platform teaching, securing the highest quality staff, and potential for curriculum development. (ESG Standard 1.5)
- Adopt periodic in-class observations of teaching to all staff including short-term contract staff and part-time staff members engaged in student-facing activity. (ESG Standard 1.5)
- Adopt a more proactive approach to identifying additional student needs beyond existing processes for self-declaration. (ESG Standard 1.6)
- Develop student support on careers services to enhance student employability. (ESG Standard 1.6)
- Broaden the University's KPI on academic performance and outcomes, including success of particular student cohorts, progression and completion rates, graduate destinations, and student satisfaction, and any indicators relating to monitoring actions taken in response to academic performance and outcomes issues. (ESG Standard 1.7)
- Review the roles and responsibilities for information collection, analysis and dissemination to establish an integrated and strategic approach to meet its quality assurance needs going forward. (ESG Standard 1.7)
- Strengthen information about pass rates and graduate employment on its website for interested stakeholders. (ESG Standard 1.8)

Key strategic changes since the last IQR review visit

8 The University has remained relatively stable since the last IQR review visit, with few major developments occurring. The organisational structure is the same, however, there have been changes to the senior management team with the appointment of a new Executive Director for Quality Assurance and Acting Assistant Registrar. The Executive Director for Quality Assurance has an extensive background in ISO Certification and is leading, together with support from the Compliance Manager, an effort to develop compliant procedures that will enable the University to embed more fully its quality assurance processes. The mid-cycle review team found that this had informed development of the Quality Manual and a decision to extend the coverage of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) across the University. The University also intends to set up an Academic Development Office under a Director of Academic Development when funding allows.

9 The review team conducted a site visit during the mid-cycle review, including the observation of new teaching spaces and refurbishments. Students and staff at the meeting confirmed that the facilities and resources are sufficient and right for their learning and teaching. More details are provided below (paragraphs 33-37).

10 The mid-cycle review team also heard that the University has further refined its thinking in relation to its overall strategic approach to teaching and learning, which it sees as a blend of autopoiesis, heutogy, and Gurukal drua. The University informed the review team that this philosophy recognises the importance of their operating context, self-directed learning and the relationship between the teacher (guru), school (kal) and the voyage (Drua) of both students and the University. The review team found that this approach had demonstrably influenced programme development by considering the needs of the region,

with a focus on establishing pedagogies and infrastructure that supports self-directed and independent learning and the University's third mission activities that place local communities at the centre.

11 Staff research has also been a continued area of strategic focus for the University since the last IQR visit. Academic staff are encouraged to produce at least one publication annually in a peer-reviewed journal, as outlined in the University's Strategic Plan 2022/26. The review team was informed that the University is actively addressing barriers to conducting research, especially in the medical school, and encouraging staff to undertake higher level qualifications, including to PhD, in subject areas where this has been less common, for instance law. In 2025, the University signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Sugar Research Institute of Fiji (SRIF) to research, student attachments/internships, training, short courses tailored to industry needs. The University has signed further MoU's with the Pacific Specialist Healthcare (PSH) Hospitals and University of Bradford, among others, which include goals to collaborate on research activity.

12 In addition, the action plan developed following the last IQR review visit has influenced strategic changes, including in relation to the development and refinement of quality assurance processes for teaching observation and internal audit. The action plan has also impacted on further refinement to strategic planning processes and their connection to key performance indicators and the use of data and other management information.

Findings from the mid-cycle review analysis

13 The IQR report noted as good practice that the University engages with alumni and external industry stakeholders in the design of their awards and student experience. The mid-cycle review team heard that alumni and industry stakeholders continue to be involved in programme development. It is widespread practice for schools to hold roundtable events to gather feedback from employers. The University has extended its work in this area, distributing a survey to alumni concerning graduate employment and launching a dedicated alumni portal on its website that is at an embryonic stage.

14 The IQR report also recognised as good practice that the University encourages innovation in teaching methods and the use of new technologies in teaching. The mid cycle review team found this has continued and following consultation with staff and students, the University has kept its virtual learning environment (VLE) for online learning that continues to be valued by students. The University is actively encouraging staff to take part in professional development to enhance their online and blended pedagogy. This approach is stressed in the strategic plan and further supported by investment in electronic learning resources.

15 The other area of good practice found was the University develops a proactive approach to providing a wide range of learning resource and student support, especially during the pandemic. The mid-cycle review team found the University has kept key features of its approach to teaching, learning and student support during the pandemic. Currently, during periods of adverse weather, the University can revert to online learning as needed. Furthermore, blended learning is still accessible to a wide range of students to account for the distributed nature of the student body and the challenging transport infrastructure in the country.

The IQR Report included fourteen recommendations, as follows.

16 The IQR recommended that the University should review the University's key quality assurance practices to ensure they include critical analysis and actions to drive continuous improvement (ESG Standard 1.1). In response the University committed to developing a

Quality Manual, together with a series of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) that set out clear expectations for departments and staff. The mid-cycle review team found that the Quality Manual set the high-level framework for continuous improvement with corresponding detail contained in the respective SOPs. Staff understood the role of both the manual and SOPs and the consistent articulation of the University's quality assurance framework made it clear that these documents were instructing the University's approach to critical analysis and continuous improvement. As highlighted elsewhere in this report, a number of quality assurance processes, such as class observation and internal audit, have been established and refined since the IQR report in 2022. The review team found evidence that these were being implemented effectively and were, again, well understood by staff. Critical analysis is also supported through the sub-strategic plans constructed by schools and departments and subsequent quarterly reporting to Senate.

17 The IQR recommended that the University should take advantage of existing and readily available resources to develop a more sophisticated understanding and approach to academic integrity (ESG Standard 1.1). The University stated, as part of its action plan, that it would respond by embedding academic integrity as a topic within its internal Learning and Teaching Symposia as well as explaining policies and procedures to students during orientation and procuring Turnitin features for detection of Artificial Intelligence (AI). The mid-cycle review team found that all actions within the plan had been progressed, for example a Learning and Teaching Symposium was held in February 2025 and had a session focussed on Artificial Intelligence in Student Assignments. The University's orientation programme addresses academic integrity and misconduct, and this is supplemented by information provided in the Course Outline for each module. Turnitin is being used to detect the use of artificial intelligence as well as plagiarism and the review team found that staff and students are clear about the regulations governing misconduct and associated penalties. The mid-cycle review team did identify that while some programmes are harnessing the benefits of AI in relation to teaching, learning and student assessment other discipline areas have a more restricted position surrounding its integration and students commented that a more consistent approach across schools that recognised the importance of a balanced approach to AI would be beneficial. The review team considered that greater consistency in the approach to the use of AI was an area that merited greater consideration by the University as it continues to refine its approach to the use of artificial intelligence.

18 The IQR recommended that the University should continue its policy drive beyond the Fiji Higher Education Commission to achieve sustainable awards developed in-house to meet an international, as well as emergent, national economic market need (ESG Standard 1.2). In responding to this recommendation, the University informed the team that while the University is committed to serving the needs of the Ministry, the Fiji Higher Education Commission and national development plan, it also recognises the importance of its autonomy and wider responsibility to serve the region and international community. The University stated that this is an important consideration in programme design and has influenced decisions to offer a programme Interdisciplinary Studies even though it was refused access to funding, which consequently requires students to self-fund.

19 The IQR recommended that the University should establish an internal independent Moderation Policy and Practice for marking assessments to minimise the perceived risk of the University being accused of biased practices concerning student assessment and attainment (ESG Standard 1.3). While the action plan stated the University would develop and implement an internal Moderation Policy, the team found that at the time of the mid-cycle review this had not been completed. The University does have a system for the internal moderation of exam questions, which is governed by a Standard Operating Procedure. It also has a process for verifying that assessment marks are calculated correctly. However, there is no use of second or blind marking or any method of sampling to moderate assessment and ensure its accuracy and fairness. The mid-cycle review team did

hear from some schools that they sample scripts at a range of different GPA points. However, this is not required by the University, the practice is not consistent and there is no record of it having been conducted. Despite the financial constraints referenced by the University and acknowledged by the review team, the team nevertheless encourages the University to further revise its approach to moderation of assessment to mitigate the risk of bias and ensure fairness for students.

20 The IQR recommended that the University should thoroughly address the assessment practices around marking, moderation, use of academic external examiners, and other external reference to other higher education standards to align to international good practice in other higher education systems (ESG Standard 1.3). As discussed as part of the previous recommendation, the University has not developed its Internal Moderation Policy. The University informed the review team that this was partly due to the cost implications of second or blind marking and/or sampling approaches. The University also cited implications in relation to academic freedom. The review team considers that there is no risk to academic freedom in setting up internal moderation processes designed to ensure the integrity of assessment. The mid-cycle review team therefore encourages the University to further reflect on its implementation of the action plan prior to IQR reaccreditation and implement its stated action to address the recommendation.

21 The IQR recommended that the University should speed up senate approval of the Admissions and Grievance Appeals Policy (ESG Standard 1.4). The University has subsequently approved its Admissions Regulations and Student Grievance Policy. In addressing the recommendation, the University has set up a section of the Assessment Regulations that governs recognition of prior learning (RPL) and incorporated a section in the Admissions Regulations that addresses the process for applications from mature students. RPL applications are considered by the Board of Studies. The mid-cycle review team found that the University still needs to codify an applicant's right to appeal an admissions decision. The University confirmed that this will be incorporated into a revised version of the Student Regulation.

22 The IQR review team recommended that the University should develop effective monitoring arrangements to ensure that its published regulations for admissions are consistently applied in practice (ESG Standard 1.4). In its report the IQR review team referenced the fact that the Student Recruitment Committee was in abeyance in 2022 despite having responsibility for the oversight of recruitment and admissions. The IQR review team considered that this may have impinged on the University's ability to effectively review its approach. The University informed the mid-cycle review team that the Student Recruitment Committee is still in abeyance and that responsibility for oversight of admissions rests with the Deans in their respective schools. The University has however responded by setting up an internal audit procedure that is set out in the Quality Manual and that will be applied to admissions processes. The review team recognised that, when implemented, this has the potential to contribute to effective monitoring but also considers that the University should reflect on where oversight of admissions rests within the active committee structure of the University. It considers this is especially important as senior leaders reflected on the variability of student recruitment from year to year and the fact that the reasons for this fluctuation are not well understood.

23 The IQR review team recommended that the University should focus on staff continued professional development (CPD) to address the challenge of post-pandemic digital platform teaching, securing the highest quality staff, and potential for curriculum development (ESG Standard 1.5). The University informed the mid-cycle review team that focus on staff professional development under the theme of Learning and Teaching has been a key strategic development since the IQR review visit. The University conducted a training needs analysis and produced a training plan. The resultant training calendars and

staff development records show a wide range of professional development taking place. This includes training on the new SOPs, software and hardware and academic regulations and procedures, as well as attendance at conferences on Educational and Instructional Technology and Piuru and Pacific Teacher Challenges. Specifically, in relation to teaching through the digital platform the University have been encouraging staff to attend webinars on the VLE to strengthen their understanding of using the full functionality of the virtual learning environment.

24 The IQR review team recommended that the University should adopt periodic in-class observations of teaching to all staff including short-term contract staff and part-time staff members engaged in student-facing activity (ESG Standard 1.5). The University has set up a class observation system whereby teaching staff are observed by senior colleagues. A suitable class observation template has been developed and the mid-cycle review team found that observations are being conducted consistently, against criteria with clear records kept. Academic staff provided the review team with examples as to how this had strengthened their practice, including more routine use of the diamond lesson plan model.

25 The IQR review team recommended that the University should adopt a more proactive approach to identifying additional student needs beyond existing processes for self-declaration (ESG Standard 1.6). The University informed the mid-cycle review team that this remained an active priority for the University, and it was working to strengthen its support for students with disabilities, including dyslexia, autism and ADHD, in a context where there are cultural sensitivities surrounding disability. Staff informed the review team that, in addition to arrangements for self-declaration, student counsellors are central to providing support and help to train lecturers in signs that students may have added needs. The University has a Strategic Wellness Plan 2025/28 in place that aims to cultivate a resilient, inclusive and health-conscious University community. As part of the plan the University intends to establish a Wellness Centre as a hub for services and outreach. The Counselling Annual Plan incorporates a wide range of support and presentations that are of help for students with added needs, including panic and anxiety, self-compassion and public speaking workshops. The plan is reviewed as part of the annual counselling report. The review team considered that the Strategic Wellness Plan, Counselling Annual Plan and Report could all be strengthened by explicit references to support for students with disabilities. Nevertheless, staff assume a proactive approach to supporting students and provided suitable examples of referral between different departments, including in relation to welfare issues.

26 The IQR review team recommended that the University should develop student support on careers services to enhance student employability (ESG Standard 1.6). The University informed the mid-cycle review team that they had identified good practice in the Business School and have rolled this out across the University. The University now delivers an annual programme of four workshops designed to enhance students' negotiation, communication and time management skills, as well as their emotional intelligence. Additionally, the University offers support with interview skills and CV writing, runs careers workshops and has established an alumni portal on the website.

27 The IQR review team recommended that the University should broaden the University's KPI on academic performance and outcomes, including success of particular student cohorts, progression and completion rates, graduate destinations, and student satisfaction, and any indicators relating to monitoring actions taken in response to academic performance and outcomes issues (ESG Standard 1.7). To address this recommendation the University stated has developed a Strategic Plan 2022/26 and implemented a system whereby School's and administrative departments develop Sub-Strategic plans that are linked to key performance indicators. The Vice-Chancellor produces an Annual Sub Strategic Measurement Report. The mid cycle review team found that the Measurement Report includes explicit targets for enrolment, retention, completion and achievement, as

well as indicators related to student satisfaction. Evidence also shows that the University is surpassing its targets for retention and completion and while recruitment overall has declined since 2019, the University saw an increase in student numbers in 2025. Overall, the review team found that the University has a detailed strategic plan, explicit and relevant key performance indicators and established arrangements for monitoring performance.

28 The IQR review team recommended that the University should review the roles and responsibilities for information collection, analysis and dissemination to establish an integrated and strategic approach to meet its quality assurance needs going forward (ESG Standard 1.7). Departmental responsibilities for the collection, analysis and dissemination of data have been considered as part of the University's move to develop a Quality Manual and produce SOPs for each school, department and centre. The University considers that this will ensure comprehensive information is provided to senior managers, Deans and Heads of Department for analysis and to provide the University with the data needed for future quality assurance reviews and reporting to Senate and Council. Staff informed the mid-cycle review team that data requests from the Registrar are generated by IT and provided to the Quality Assurance Department and functional units for analysis and reporting. The review team found that this approach was well understood by staff and evidenced in a range of reports to the University committees. Provision of this data ensures the University is aware of its performance and able to respond promptly where intervention is needed.

29 The IQR review team recommended that the University should strengthen information about pass rates and graduate employment on its website for interested stakeholders (ESG Standard 1.8). The University's action plan confirmed that it intended to review its methodology for data on pass rates and re-design its website where it will present comprehensive public data. At the time of the mid-cycle review plans to revise the website were still under development and data on pass rates and graduate employment were not yet available. However, the University provided evidence that information about graduate employment is referenced in the media and available for public consumption.

Development of quality assurance and enhancement procedures

30 It was clear to the mid-cycle review team that the University has further strengthened its quality assurance and enhancement procedures following the last IQR visit. The appointment of a Director for Quality Assurance and the focus on developing a Quality Manual and Standard Operating procedures shows a commitment to ensuring a more consistent approach to the management of quality and standards. Staff awareness and understanding of the contribution of SOPs to quality assurance and their responsibility for their implementation was strong across the University.

31 The University has also strengthened its commitment to key performance indicators and the clarity of its approach to the collection and analysis of management information. This has aided improvements in annual monitoring and the mid-cycle review team found that reports produced by the University included detailed information.

32 Currently, data is provided in a static format and there are no live dashboards available for staff. The mid-cycle review team considered that a future move towards developing such dashboards would improve the accessibility of real-time data for staff. The review team also found that there are certain areas, for example assessment, where the University would still benefit from strengthening its quality assurance processes.

Findings from the observations of facilities and learning resources

33 The University has three campuses and a number of delivery sites across Fiji, they are the main Sawnei campus, Lautoka, the Samabula Campus in Suva and Ba Campus in Ba. The other delivery sites are Levuka Office in Levuka, Marine Drive centre, Lautoka and the Naviti Centre, Lautoka. The review team was able to see the facilities and learning resources at the Saweni campus and the Naviti Centre. The mid-cycle review team found that considering the financial constraints the University faces there has been significant investment infrastructure, including facilities and learning resources. Since the last IQR visit, the University has obtained a third campus, an additional office and is exploring a potential fourth campus on another island.

34 The mid-cycle review team viewed a wide range of facilities, including lecture and seminar rooms, IT laboratories, a cafeteria, nurses' station, student helpdesk, private and shared staff offices, a staffroom, the two-floor library and recreational facilities. Teaching rooms benefit from high-quality audio-visual equipment designed to support blended learning. The team also viewed a suitable series of medical facilities including laboratories and simulation suites. The University plans to invest further in its built environment, but the mid-cycle team found that the University has a range of fit-for-purpose teaching, learning and social spaces that adequately support the student experience.

35 The mid-cycle team was informed that internet bandwidth has been improved and that there is a rolling upgrade in place for new IT hardware in laboratories, with an aim to update a further 100 machines by the first quart of 2026. The University has also taken a strategic decision to invest in laptops rather than desktops for staff to aid flexible working. Staff and students confirmed that they viewed these as positive developments.

36 The University has received a capital grant from the government and is investing six million Fijian dollars in a Hindi Studies and an Indigenous I'taukel Studies Centre, which will also feature an art gallery. The intention is to develop academic programmes through to PhD. The University is also collaborating with the Indian government, and the University showed the review team the architect's drawings and the land for building, although construction is yet to begin.

37 Power outages remain an ongoing problem for the University, which has consequently invested in an automatic generator to aid continuity to teaching and learning. The generator was on site and viewed by the team and was being commissioned in the two weeks following the visit.

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Southgate House, Southgate Street, Gloucester GL1 1UB
Registered charity numbers 1062746 and SC037786

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