



# International Quality Review of Abu Dhabi School of Management

May 2022

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## About this review

This is a report of an International Quality Review conducted by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) at Abu Dhabi School of Management. The review took place from 24 to 26 May 2022 and was conducted by a team of three reviewers, as follows:

- Ms Fiona Crozier
- Dr Dave Dowland (international reviewer)
- Ms Chrystalle Margallo (student reviewer)

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 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 section starting on page 2. [Explanations of the findings](#) are given in numbered paragraphs in the section starting on page 6.

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

Abu Dhabi School of Management (ADSM or the School) is located in Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Street in Abu Dhabi and is a private non-profit organisation which started in 2007-08 and is owned by Abu Dhabi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ADCCI). ADSM was licensed by the United Arab Emirates Ministry of Education - Higher Education Affairs in 2011 and is accredited through the Commission for Academic Accreditation (CAA). The School aspires to be a centre of excellence according to its mission and seeks to develop entrepreneurial managers and leaders with knowledge and skills that are recognised internationally. ADSM's vision statement reflects the long-term ambitions of the School:

'To be a center of excellence for entrepreneurship, leadership, innovation, sustainability and management through the discovery and dissemination of knowledge.'

ADSM's mission statement is:

'To develop entrepreneurial managers and leaders with the knowledge and skills to contribute to sustainable socio-economic development in the knowledge economy. The School aims to create an enriching and rewarding environment which promotes entrepreneurialism, scholarly inquiry, research, innovation, and UAE cultural heritage while fostering diversity, understanding and tolerance.'

ADSM has five core values namely: aspire to excellence; intellectual curiosity; professionalism; cultural respect; and unrelenting commitment.

To fulfil its vision and mission ADSM delivers four master's degrees as follows:

- Master of Business Administration (MBA)
- Master of Science in Quality and Business Excellence (MSQBE)
- Master of Science in Leadership and Organisational Development (MSLOD)
- Master of Science in Business Analytics (MSBA).

Many students studying these programmes are already employed in responsible positions in industry and are able to share their experiences and apply their learning directly into their job role.

ADSM had a partnership with Imperial College Business School where they helped develop the MBA which was then approved by the CAA. ADSM is developing partnerships, both in UAE and internationally; for example, it has memoranda of understanding with the Energy Institute, the Chicago School of Professional Psychology, and the Indian Institute of Management Indore for cooperation on areas of common interest by students, lecturers and research groups.

ADSM has also joined the Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRIME) as a member and is a member of the AMBA (Association of MBAs) development network and the Business Graduates Association.

ADSM is a young school of business which is developing and has aspirations to add to its portfolio of programmes and gain recognition both inside the UAE and internationally as a provider of quality programmes. Continued development may include a move to a new campus out of town, which may be a new construction.

Major challenges faced by ADSM include developing research outcomes; implementing process flow and technology solutions to ensure consistency of the documents and data; international faculty recruitment and retention; use of appropriate external programme benchmarking; coping with the continued impact of COVID pandemic disruptions; and the extensive national regulatory demands. ADSM has aspirations to improve its global ranking position, particularly with respect to other similar schools in the UAE and internationally.

In reaching conclusions about the extent to which ADSM meets the 10 ESG standards, the review team followed the handbook for International Quality Review (June 2021). The review process is evidence-based and the review team was provided with a self-evaluation and 272 pieces of supporting evidence prepared by the School. During the three-day visit, the review team held meetings with the ADSM President, the senior management team, academic staff, students, academic support teams, employers, and graduates as well as regular meetings with the Facilitator. The review team also toured key teaching and learning resources and had a final clarification meeting with the President and senior staff.

The review team concludes that Abu Dhabi School of Management **meets** the 10 ESG standards and has identified seven areas of good practice and four recommendations.

## **QAA's conclusions about Abu Dhabi School of Management**

The QAA review team reached the following conclusions about the higher education provision at Abu Dhabi School of Management.

### **European Standards and Guidelines**

Abu Dhabi School of Management **meets** all of the 10 ESG Standards and Guidelines.

### **Good practice**

The QAA review team identified the following features of **good practice** at Abu Dhabi School of Management.

- The clear and extensive links between the School's vision, mission and strategic planning process and the quality assurance system through all processes and at all levels (ESG Standard 1.1).
- The development and implementation of the ADSM Internal Quality Review process as an internal mechanism for ensuring the effectiveness and efficiency of the School's processes and policies (ESG Standard 1.1).
- The approach to student engagement through interactive, co-creative teaching and learning and the linkage of teaching and research is a living embodiment of the School's vision and mission (ESG Standard 1.3).
- The explicit connection between institutional strategic and operational planning and the professional development of each member of faculty staff (ESG Standard 1.5).
- The thoughtful, committed, collaborative engagement of the School with students through the delivery and ongoing enhancement of the Academic Support Centre (ESG Standard 1.6).
- The strategic and operational management cycle of the School enables the systematic use of data, leading to the ready identification of risks and quality enhancement and supports the realisation of the mission and vision of the School (ESG Standard 1.7).
- The Critical Self-Evaluation Reports (CSER) process, in particular the provision of templates that provide a link to the institutional strategic goals and KPIs (ESG Standard 1.9).

## Recommendations

The QAA review team makes the following **recommendations** to Abu Dhabi School of Management.

- Make the Quality Policy publicly available on the School website (ESG Standard 1.1).
- Ensure that students and external stakeholders such as employers and alumni have a formal means of involvement in the development and revision of the Quality Assurance Policy (QAP) and associated quality assurance (QA) processes (ESG Standard 1.1).
- Review the regulations for academic appeals, mitigating circumstances and non-academic complaints ensuring clear definitions, criteria, and processes for making and reviewing decisions (ESG Standard 1.3).
- Review the processes to ensure that the information on the website remains current and accurate (ESG Standard 1.8).

## Explanation of the findings about Abu Dhabi School of Management

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 Abu Dhabi School of Management's (ADSM) Quality Assurance Policy (QAP) is part of a suite of policies, many of which are mandated by the UAE Commission for Academic Accreditation (CAA) that flow from the School's strategic vision and goals and guide its operations. The QAP is regularly updated, with the current version effective from April 2020. As required by CAA, ADSM also maintains an up-to-date Quality Assurance Manual (QAM) which explains the constituent policies and processes that make up the School's Quality Assurance System (QAS) including its links to the strategic planning process. The current version of the QAM was published in October 2021.

1.2 Internal stakeholders are able to comment on the QAP and the QAM through the School's committee structure which includes the Quality Committee which was established in June 2020. The stated purposes of this committee, which meets monthly, are to highlight quality at a strategic level and to ensure institution-wide integration of quality in the work of the School. Both documents are made available to staff and students through ADSM's internal networks and are available to external stakeholders on request.

1.3 The QAP and the QAM directly relate to the local context within which the School operates and set out the engagement with quality assurance through processes at all levels and across the School. The policy covers the regular annual cycle of internal quality review and, in particular, cites the following tools which are considered in more detail under Standard 1.9:

- Course Critical Self-Evaluation Reports (CSER)
- Unit Critical Self-Evaluation Report (CSER)
- Institutional Quality Improvement Action Plan (QIAP)
- Internal Quality Review
- Corrective measures (requirements and suggestions) from external reviews
- Operating Plan (OP).

1.4 The Executive Committee ensures the implementation of the Strategic Plan which currently covers the period from 2021 to 2025. It is supported in this by the Quality Assurance and Risk Management Office (QARMO) which tracks the implementation of the Strategic Plan and reports on the results of key performance indicators used to evaluate the extent to which ADSM is achieving its strategic goals. Progress against the Strategic Plan is reviewed quarterly. The Executive Committee exercises oversight of and approves all policies developed or updated by committees which constitute the governance framework. The academic governance committee structure comprises the Academic Council; Academic Standards Committee; Curriculum Development Committee; Research Committee; and the Admissions Committee. These standing committees involve programme directors, faculty members and other senior postholders who may chair or be members, allowing for discussion of issues relating to quality and standards and consideration of proposed academic developments within the School. Committee recommendations are ultimately considered by the Executive Committee and the Board of Trustees to determine whether proposals should proceed, taking account of ADSM's vision, mission and values; market demand; feasibility and the resource implications involved.

1.5 The team was provided with the full suite of ADSM policies, as well as with a copy of the QAM and the QAP. The team noted how extensive this suite of policies is and also that it is governed by a 'Policy on Policies'. The team was informed that many of these policies are mandated by CAA, and it was clear during meetings with staff and faculty that staff are aware of the policies and know where to find them should they need to reference them. However, documentation such as the Quality Policy and the QAM, while easily available to staff and students on the School's intranet, are only made available to external stakeholders on request and are not available on the ADSM public website. Therefore the team **recommends** that ADSM should make its Quality Policy publicly available on its website; a summary of the strategic goals and the accreditation and licensure status of the School and its programmes are available on the ADSM website.

1.6 Similarly, while it was clear to the team that internal stakeholders such as staff and students could have input into the development of the policy and the QAM through the committee structure and via the Student Council, the same could not be said for external stakeholders. The team spoke to employer representatives and alumni and was informed that both groups felt that communication channels with the School existed; nevertheless, the team was not able to find evidence of the systematic involvement of external stakeholders in the development and revision of the Quality Policy. The team therefore **recommends** that ADSM should ensure that students and external stakeholders such as employers and alumni have a formal means of involvement in the development and revision of the QAP and associated QA processes.

1.7 The team discussed the extensive range of policies with various groups of staff with a view to understanding if a relatively complicated system for quality assurance was well embedded and understood. It learned that staff strongly believe that many of the policies are directly relevant to their work and are useful tools. For example, there was a lively discussion of the benefit of the Grading and Assessment Policy which provides support and guidance to new and established faculty alike. The QAM also provides a clear account of the QA system and how it functions at governance level and on the ground. Staff were very comfortable in knowing that they could refer easily to policies as and when they needed to while acknowledging that many, unlike the Grading and Assessment Policy, were not part of their everyday life. Staff also confirmed that they are able to attend onboarding and information sessions on the QA system.

1.8 In relation to the QA system itself, the team was informed that the committee structure had been simplified and that the School had introduced its Internal Quality Review process precisely to ensure, through periodic review, that the proliferation of policies, processes and committees is evaluated to ensure that the system in place is appropriate for the size and mission of the School and is flexible enough to deal with any future changes.

1.9 The Internal Quality Review process has been relatively recently implemented and is intended to further assist ADSM in achieving its quality enhancement goals. The process is not mandated by CAA but was introduced by the School as a means of interrogating its processes and procedures to ensure alignment between practice and policy. It is intended to support the quality culture at ADSM by providing opportunities to improve quality of the QA processes and the system itself. While the Internal Quality Review process currently operates annually, there is an intention to move to a more periodic cycle of review and reflection in relation to this process. The team was able to see the Internal Quality Review report for the academic year 2020-21 and noted its focus on the outcomes of quality assurance processes and links to institutional and strategic key performance indicators (KPIs) which thus serve to reinforce the outcomes of other aspects of the quality assurance system. The team concludes that the introduction of the Internal Quality Review process is a clear example of meeting the twin goals of CAA expectations and going beyond these to



ensure the development and embedding of a quality culture that is in line with international expectations.

1.10 The team was provided with the most recent institutional strategic plan which has been updated for the period 2021-25, along with the vision and mission. The process for revising the strategic plan was driven by a Strategic Planning Steering Committee, which conducted workshops with a wide range of internal and external stakeholders as part of the consultation. The Operating Plan addresses KPIs cascading down from the Strategic Plan and the team found the clear and extensive links between the School's vision, mission and strategic planning process and the quality assurance system through all processes and at all levels to be a feature of **good practice**, from the development of the School's vision and mission through to the consistent use of institutional KPIs in course, programme, and unit Critical Self-Evaluation Reports (CSER) (see also Standard 1.9), thus ensuring ownership of strategic goals and actions at the appropriate level. The achievement of these KPIs is tracked by the QARMO and used to gauge the degree to which ADSM achieves its strategic goals and objectives. To close the loop, the Chief Quality Officer (CQO) is a member of the senior leadership team and ensures that quality concerns are addressed and embedded into the School's strategic decisions.

1.11 The team concludes that ADSM has a robust strategic planning process and uses monitoring tools such as CSERs to ensure the achievement of strategic goals at all levels. The development and implementation of the ADSM Internal Quality Review process as an internal mechanism for ensuring the effectiveness and efficiency of the School's processes and policies is a feature of **good practice**. ADSM has a Quality Policy which is supported by a clear QAM and by a series of QA processes that function at each level of activity. There are strong links between the Quality Policy and the Strategic Plan, with KPIs and related actions owned at the relevant level and monitored at institutional level. The School will want to consider to what extent it involves its external stakeholders in the development and revision of its QA system and also to ensure that the Quality Policy is clearly published on its website. The team concludes that Standard 1.1 Policy for quality assurance is **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 Proposals for new programme developments or changes to existing provision must comply with the requirements of the CAA Standards for Institutional Licensure and Programme Accreditation. These requirements include the need to ensure that the programme aligns with the local qualifications' framework (QF Emirates) which, in turn, was designed to align with the Framework for Qualifications for the European Higher Education Area (FHEQ-EHEA) and the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). Minor changes are subject to an internal approval process within the School while changes required of a more substantive nature are discussed internally before an application for change is submitted to the CAA.

2.2 ADSM maintains a New Programme Development and Revision Policy to address the development of new programmes as well as revisions made to existing programmes. This policy provides the details of the applied procedures when changing the current or designing new programmes. According to the policy, the development of any new programme or substantive change must follow four stages, as described below.

2.3 New programme ideas, which may emanate from the faculty or committees, from external stakeholders such as employers or through student feedback, are discussed between the Academic Dean and the President before being submitted to the Curriculum Development Committee (CDC). A market study to assess the feasibility of the programme may be undertaken at this stage.

2.4 Proposal submissions go to the CDC, whose role in this process is to assess matters such as the alignment of the programme with the School mission and strategic direction, with the needs of the Emirate and the UAE, and with the Qualifications Framework Emirates, in relation to programme structure and syllabi.

2.5 Following approval of the proposal by Academic Council, it is sent for final approval to the President and Executive Committee. The Director of QARMO will work on the application to ensure compliance with the required standards and also to include further information such as projections of new students and admissions requirements. Then the application is signed off by the President and sent to the Abu Dhabi Department of Education and Knowledge (ADEK), whose main role is to develop the education system in Abu Dhabi and authorise programmes for delivery, and the Commission for Academic Accreditation (CAA). The four stages are completed when approval for the programme is granted by CAA.

2.6 The substantive change process also follows the CAA requirements whereby proposed changes to syllabi are discussed and approved internally by CDC. This discussion and proposed changes are submitted as evidence to the CAA. On receipt of CAA's approval, the Programme Director implements the change and works with the Student Affairs Unit to update the programme structure on the website. This change is confirmed by the QARMO.

An example of a substantive change was provided to the team in the form of an approved change to the MSLOD programme.

2.7 The team noted the School's compliance with the CAA requirements in relation to the approval of new programmes and of substantial changes to existing programmes which ensure that the programme is correctly located on the QFEmirates. It was also able to further establish the link between the strategic planning process and the quality assurance system, specifically in relation to the development of new programmes: the five broad goals of ADSM's Strategic Plan and all the key concepts as reflected in ADSM's vision and mission are expected to be covered by courses taught in each programme. The team saw evidence through a master mapping sheet that each programme design includes:

- Programme goals
- Programme Learning Outcomes (PLOs)
- Mapping of PLOs to the QFEmirates descriptors
- Programme structure showing whether the courses are core or elective
- Thesis/Capstone Project/Signature Learning Experience
- Sequence of courses that shows the Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs) in each course and their mapping to the PLOs, Qualifications Framework Emirates and Core Life Skills.

2.8 The team also viewed an example of the required table that shows the mapping of CLOs to PLOs, the QFE and Core Life Skills and was provided with an example of an independent market study carried out by ADSM in relation to a new programme. The team found that this provides further evidence in support of the extensive links between the School's vision, mission and strategic planning process and the quality assurance system.

2.9 Although there was acknowledgement that within the strict local regulations it can be challenging to innovate, the team noted the recent implementation of an Academic Programme Advisory Committee for each programme to further facilitate the input of employers and alumni into programme design and development. Student input to the process is limited to providing feedback via the various surveys, although it is also possible for students to provide feedback informally (see also Standard 1.9).

2.10 ADSM's processes for the design and approval of new programmes comply with CAA regulations. In addition, they maintain the link with the School's strategic planning processes ensuring that each level of planning from School to course is involved in the process. The team therefore concludes that Standard 1.2 Design and approval of programmes 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 ADSM works under the oversight of government and external regulatory authorities. The institution expresses commitment to student-centred teaching and learning through an articulated teaching philosophy and methodologies. The School uses an 'Adult Learning Theory' methodology to develop student knowledge skills and competencies and to encourage autonomy in learning under faculty guidance. There are various interacting learning techniques including: co-operative learning; assessment of peer feedback; critical evaluation of literature; critique exercises; seminar presentations; simulations; case studies; problem-based learning; performance tests; and concept mapping. There are opportunities for students to work on 'real world problems' and research exercises on specific topics, often drawing on their own experience. There are interactive lectures preceded by self-paced directed study sessions. There are in-class non-graded formative assessments followed by summative assessments as shown in the Teaching and Learning Methodologies Policy.

3.2 Teaching staff have access to a Learning Management System, a version of Moodle, supported by IT Services. The Learning Management System enabled ADSM to respond to COVID by moving the delivery of teaching online, enabling the institution to gain experience in the delivery of hybrid learning. A popular platform is used as the medium for classes and meetings. The transition to online learning during the pandemic was informed by policy and steered by a working group. The working group surveyed the faculties about the effectiveness of face-to-face, online, and blended modes of delivery to inform enhancements to resources and also responded to student feedback about support for the use of technology, for example providing more support for particular types of software in response to demand.

3.3 Student progression and achievement are monitored and supported through an Academic Advising System and an Academic Support Office. Student academic profiles are assessed with students assigned to faculty and identified for any particular support that may be required. There are webinars and academic support sessions on topics such as academic writing. Academic advisers may refer students to the Academic Support Centre to help with the development of master's level skills.

3.4 The Commission for Academic Accreditation (CAA) has confirmed that all programmes are aligned to the Qualifications Framework Emirates Level 9 of the UAE Qualifications Framework, EQF Level 7 and the Bologna Framework Second Cycle CAA Report of the External Review Team, 17-20 October 2021. Alignment is achieved by mapping programme learning outcomes and course learning outcomes to QFE Level 9 descriptors, and Core Life Skills through programme and course design, evaluation, and assessment instruments. The course and programme learning outcomes are published in programme specifications which are publicly available on the School's website.

3.5 The Grading and Assessment Policy is the basis for establishing assessment against defined learning outcomes, setting out roles, responsibilities, types, weights, rubric, conduct, marking, second marking, reporting of results and sharing of good practice. The assessment methods and arrangements are designed to address the CAA Standard 2019 which adheres to QFE requirements on the knowledge, skills and competencies that a student must achieve upon graduation.

3.6 There are also grade marking, second marking moderation, approval and change policies as well as an Examination Policy. According to the combined policies, the Programme Directors validate and approve assessments and there are second marking processes and grade moderation arrangements. The Dean's office manages the arrangements, assigning second markers to validate graded assessments. The second marker validates sample categories of low, medium, and high marked assessments. A third marker may be used if there is no agreement between the first two markers. The Programme Directors and the Academic Dean give final approval for the grades. CAA also has access to assessments, marking and moderation records for quality control. Senior management and academic staff who met the review team demonstrated thorough knowledge of the grading and assessment policies.

3.7 Assessments are submitted electronically via the Learning Management System using plagiarism-detecting software, as stipulated in the Academic Integrity Policy. Students who met the team stated they were well aware of the Academic Integrity Policy. There is monitoring of turnaround times for the return of feedback to students on assessed work. Students who met the team said that they were happy with the timeliness and quality of feedback.

3.8 The School has arrangements for mitigating circumstances for students whose assessments have been disrupted by illness or by other circumstances beyond their control. Decisions on mitigating circumstances are made by the teacher, with the Academic Dean involved in more complicated cases as stated in the Grading and Assessment Policy and the Grade Moderation Policy and confirmed by senior staff and academic staff. The policies do not, however, specify any systematic mechanism for student appeals against decisions on their mitigating circumstances applications.

3.9 Similarly, there is a student appeals policy which enables academic appeals although the underlying definitions and processes are not clear. The terms 'appeal' and 'complaint' are used in the policy without distinction. The definition and the grounds for appeal are not articulated in detail. It is unclear in the policy whether a student may appeal against academic judgement.

3.10 There is a policy for student grievances. A grievance is defined as any alleged violation of an ADSM policy which the student wishes to contest. The policy does not state what a student should do if s/he regards the policy itself as unreasonable nor more generally how to proceed with any concern about a shortfall in service. The policy includes provision for a hearing to consider the case run by the Director of Student Affairs. There is no mention of a complainant having the right to be accompanied to a hearing nor of the procedure for a hearing when Student Affairs itself is the subject of a grievance. The team, however, saw no evidence of any lack of fairness or reasonableness in the handling of cases by the School but concluded that the procedural clarity issues should be resolved. The team therefore **recommends** that ADSM should review the regulations for academic appeals, mitigating circumstances and non-academic complaints ensuring clear definitions, criteria and processes for making and reviewing decisions.

3.11 ADSM is mindful of the needs and attributes of a student population already mostly in employment and offers a variety of modes of study: full-time, part-time, and intensive. The MSc in Business Analytics (MSBA) was lengthened from 12 to 15 months in response to student feedback. Students told the review team of their satisfaction at the flexibility and resourcefulness of the institution's response to their needs.

3.12 The School highlights its commitment to develop entrepreneurship in students through its mission and accompanying public statements on the website, expressing the aim to 'offer graduate degrees within an entrepreneurial ecosystem': <https://adsm.ac.ae>. That

commitment was also evidenced in the institutional meetings with the review team. Many students have their own businesses or are already employed in significant business roles. ADSM draws on that business experience through interactive teaching and learning and offers support to address practical issues and problems. Recently ADSM has been developing resources through the creation of an incubator scheme built through international and business partnership.

3.13 The Research Strategy 2021-25 is the basis for linking research and teaching: ADSM promotes and enhances student engagement in research activities through applied research projects, capstone strategic management projects, and participation in research forums and seminars. There is an ongoing series of research events to promote scholarly activities and strengthen the link between teaching and research:

<https://adsm.ac.ae/research/research-events/>. ADSM conducts monthly research seminars <https://adsm.ac.ae/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Seminars-AY2020-2021.pdf>.

3.14 The Case Center UK promotes the international publication of faculty and student case studies, with some produced jointly by faculty and students:

<https://casecenter.adsm.ac.ae/>.

3.15 The review team saw evidence of a growing number of international partnerships to enrich teaching and learning, including formal collaborations, research and other short-term visits by faculty, the development of entrepreneurship, artificial intelligence and supply management and the sharing of good practice. ADSM reflected on its commitment and achievements to date during meetings with the review team. ADSM is active in several international networks of good practice and thought leadership in business management and other related subject areas. ADSM joined the United Nations linked Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME) in April 2020 expressing institutional commitment to sustainability in business education. ADSM has received a high rating in the international 2022 Positive Impact Rating survey of Business Schools report, which highlights social impact. ADSM benefits from its links with the Abu Dhabi Chamber of Commerce and Industry, with access to local businesses and organisations across the state.

3.16 ADSM's approach to student engagement through interactive, co-creative teaching and learning and the linkage of teaching and research is a living embodiment of the School's vision and mission which the review team recognises as **good practice**. Standard 1.3 Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment is therefore **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', eg student admission, progression, recognition and certification.**

### **Findings**

4.1 The School provides information relating to its approach to higher education in several ways, including via its website and Programme Specification Documents. Prospective students may also download specific programme specifications via the School's website.

4.2 Students benefit from comprehensive information within the Programme Specification Documents and support through the admissions process; they receive a robust induction programme and personalised study plans provided by the Academic Support Center (ASC) as stated in their policy. Students are met with customised services to meet their needs, including webinars and academic support sessions on topics such as academic writing, all of which provide necessary conditions for students to progress in their academic career.

4.3 There is information on the School's course offer on ADSM's website under their programmes, which provides more comprehensive information relating to programme structure and content, programme educational objectives and learning outcomes, as well as programme-specific admission requirements.

4.4 Processes are in place to enable smooth admission into academic programmes offered at ADSM. The Graduate Admissions Policy provides a standard set of admission requirements and detail of the admissions process. The School has a clear policy for the recognition of prior learning, the Transfer Admissions Policy and Recognition for Prior Learning Policy, which allows ADSM to consistently admit students who wish to get credit and recognition for prior learning at another recognised higher education institution.

4.5 There is a maintained comprehensive induction process. ADSM ensures that a formal induction is provided to students and information within the comprehensive Programme Specification Documents is available to applicants prior to admission into the programmes. Induction is overseen by the Office of Student Affairs, during which students are introduced to their peers and the academic team. They are also given a tour of the School's campus and facilities and students' association.

4.6 ADSM maintains a Unit Critical Self-Evaluation Report (CSER), as confirmed in meetings with senior and academic staff, to evaluate the effectiveness of all support tools. Students state that monitoring student progression falls under the department of student affairs.

4.7 There are clear mechanisms in place to ensure students are supported to achieve throughout the student life-cycle. Student progression is monitored by the Student Affairs Office throughout their chosen programme of study. The Student Affairs Office provides students who are at risk with a study plan from the Academic Support Centre (ASC) to support their progression. Students who met the review team confirmed the effectiveness of the ASC in supporting student progression.

4.8 ADSM trains its faculty on the CAA requirements, some of which is provided in the form of weekly speakers to share best practice in teaching and research. ADSM's Quality Manual is aligned with CAA requirements along with training for staff.

4.9 ADSM is licensed and accredited at the programme level by the UAE's national accreditation and licensing agency, CAA.

4.10 Student records, including admissions records, are maintained by the Academic Dean's Office and are provided to the Registrar and Students Affairs Director for monitoring Student Records Policy. Graduates are issued with a degree certificate and transcript, which includes the qualification obtained, course level, indicative content, and grades achieved. The Graduation Committee then meets to confirm the awarding of degrees. This information is also available to students on the ADSM application.

4.11 Students experience a transparent admissions process through the ADSM website containing course specifications and requirements. Upon admission, a comprehensive induction is provided as is an introduction to support services available to students. Throughout the student life-cycle the Student Affairs Office provides comprehensive support that meets the needs of students. The support systems are enhanced through the process of a Unit Critical Self-Evaluation Report to ensure monitoring and evaluation. The review team therefore concludes that the admissions processes are robust and that Standard 1.4 Student admission, progression, recognition, and certification is **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 The Human Resources department at the School coordinates recruitment, selection and onboarding for faculty and staff. There is a standard Recruitment and Selection Policy. The Professional Requirements for Teaching Policy defines and maintains eligibility criteria for faculty to teach at ADSM at postgraduate level in accordance with CAA requirements, including terminal degrees in the teaching discipline and either a strong record of research and scholarly activity or significant professional experience as a practitioner in an applied discipline as defined in the Faculty and Staff Professional Development Policy.

5.2 Faculty receive induction and ongoing support from IT Services to optimise their use of technology in teaching and learning. Learning resources support was provided to help teaching staff adjust to teaching online in response to COVID. The institutional approach was set out through a policy framework, including the Distance Learning Contingency for Emergency Situations Policy and the e-Learning Policy. Teaching staff reflected in their discussions with the review team on their experience of developing expertise in hybrid learning with the help of the support services.

5.3 The programme of professional development includes a CPD week on teaching, learning and research and other events, as well as support for teaching staff to attend seminars, conferences, and symposia. There is emphasis on the use of professional development to help teaching staff develop student-centred teaching, with sensitivity to a diversity of student learning styles and the particular needs and talents of postgraduate students already in employment. Another theme of professional development is the facilitation of good practice in assessment and quality assurance. Training records of professional development are retained and monitored through faculty profiles on HR systems. ADSM articulates clear, transparent, and fair processes for staff recruitment and employment and maintains an anti-discrimination policy, complemented by other policies on equity, conduct and roles such as the Equity Groups Policy and Code of Conduct.

5.4 The institution is aware of the challenges of recruiting and retaining high quality international teachers and seeks to take particular care in the recruitment and induction processes.

5.5 ADSM introduced a temporary peer observation process to monitor the quality of online teaching sessions delivered during the pandemic. The institution is now preparing for the establishment of a full peer observation scheme for all forms of teaching.

5.6 The Faculty and Staff Professional Development Policy links the strategic development of the institution to the professional development of personnel. The professional development of support staff is planned in connection with a system of annual appraisal. The annual cycle of faculty evaluation is supported by the Faculty Yearly Workload Agreement Template, linking yearly professional development planning with the annual evaluation of teaching, research and other services and workload planning. Students are also asked to complete the students experience survey to enhance practices. The workload agreement maps in detail how the individual faculty member addresses institutional objectives and key performance indicators, also identifying additional training and development needs. The processes feed into individual and collective faculty training within the Faculty Yearly Workload Agreement and professional development plans. There are

systematic arrangements for the induction and onboarding of new teaching staff. There are standard publications for staff explaining institutional organisational arrangements, support and policy frameworks as explained in the Catalogue and Faculty Handbook.

5.7 There is strategic emphasis on the construction of links between teaching and research led by a Research Director as a member of the executive team. Student engagement in research is promoted through applied research projects, capstone strategic management projects, and participation in research forums and seminars: <https://adsm.ac.ae/research/student-research>. There is a programme to promote scholarly activities and to strengthen the links between education and research: <https://adsm.ac.ae/research/research-events>; a research mentoring scheme for younger members of faculty; regular Friday faculty research development seminars and monthly research informative seminars: <https://adsm.ac.ae/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Seminars-AY2020-2021.pdf>; and a case centre run in collaboration with 'The Case Center UK' that promotes the publication of faculty and student case studies, which are enriched by the professional experience of students: <https://casecenter.adsm.ac.ae>. The School monitors the take up rates of professional development.

5.8 The CAA gave a positive opinion in October 2021 about the level of spending and the effective monitoring of professional development of activity which 'speaks of a strong intent to develop faculty' - CAA Report of the External Review Team, 17-20 October 2021. The team concludes that the explicit connection between institutional strategic and operational planning and the professional development of each member of faculty staff is **good practice**. The team concludes that ADSM assures itself of the competence of its teachers and applies fair and transparent processes for the recruitment and development of the staff and 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 There is a wide range of student support covering all aspects of the student journey. Students are supported by academics and the Academic Support Centre (ASC). The ASC provides excellent support for students to flourish in their studies by customising their services to meet their needs throughout the student journey. During the visit, students explained ways in which they have been supported by the ASC.

6.2 Students are provided with all software needed for success on their course supported by the equipment and Software Technology Support Policy. ADSM sustains a process of budget allocation for its Information Technology Unit, which enables the enhancement of technology resources for student success. All physical spaces are self-maintained by ADSM. During the visit meetings, students confirmed having access to various physical resources within the campus such as the Library, IT Suites, and multi-function rooms which are all listed in the ADSM Catalogue and were visited by the review team during the visit tour. During the pandemic ADSM maintained a Distance Learning Contingency for Emergency Situations Policy establishing standards and guidelines for the School to adapt to online education.

6.3 ADSM engages in close and ongoing consultation with students on the development of student support and learning resources, involving them as partners in committees such as the Academic Programme Advisory Committee. Students are included in consultative committees, such as the Student Council. Students are also consulted through regular surveys such as the Student Orientation Survey and the Student Experience Survey.

6.4 ADSM students are working professionals. Student Services customise their services to meet student needs. Students are supported through webinars and academic support sessions on topics such as academic writing; a comprehensive list of sessions was seen through the Academic Coach Support Workshops.

6.5 The faculty of student affairs includes academic administrators who provide the faculty with the student profiles, which support identifying students at risk to provide early intervention. Students receive an orientation to the support services. The review team saw evidence of the attentiveness and flexibility of support services in response to the needs of students.

6.6 Students are taught through active learning where they are provided with a range of assessments, both formative and summative, on work-based learning to encourage learning as shown on the course specification within the course files. The course designs enable sessions on entrepreneurship and projects involving entrepreneurship. During the visit, the review team was provided with examples of student feedback making a difference to teaching and learning arrangements. An example of student feedback provided was the preference for online and face-to-face lessons, for which ADSM catered. Many students have their own business and ADSM supports some students through incubator units.

6.7 Students spoke well of the attentive support that they received from the service departments and the faculty. The review team commends the thoughtful, committed,

collaborative engagement of the School with students through the delivery and ongoing enhancement of the Academic Support Centre as **good practice**.

6.8 ADSM maintains policies on all procedures and services which are shared with students at induction. The Office of Student Affairs ensures procedures are followed, such as the Distance Learning Contingency for Emergency Situations Policy, Quality Assurance Policy and the Academic Integrity Policy.

6.9 ADSM operates a second-marking process where another faculty member grades a sample of assessments with a third moderator if there is no agreement. The CAA also has access to assessments, marking and moderation.

6.10 ADSM staff are given opportunities to take courses outside ADSM to develop skills and knowledge, which is requested through the Dean's Office. This is supported through the Faculty and Staff Professional Development Policy. A partnership with the Chicago School of Technology provides workshops with external speakers. Staff are provided with staff handbooks to provide further guidance on staff development as well as faculties sharing good practice and experience at faculty meetings to enhance practice as a whole. ADSM started a peer-review process during COVID to look at recordings of lectures and provide feedback to enhance support and teaching.

6.11 ADSM allocates excellent funding for their learning and teaching activities and support mechanisms that enable students to access support services at ease and acquire the resources to assist student learning. Support from the Student Affairs Office, Academic Support Centre, and tutors are available to students to support mobility across and within the higher education system; this includes services to meet the needs of ADSM's diverse student population. All support services are monitored and evaluated to ensure they are fit for purpose and accessible to students.

6.12 The review team concludes that Standard 1.6 Learning resources and student support 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 ADSM uses a wide range of data sets for quality assurance and enhancement to track the student journey through the institution and to meet national regulatory requirements as described below. The governance of data is stipulated through a series of policies addressing confidentiality, information release, and data security.

7.2 The Quality Assurance and Risk Management Office (QARMO) provides data on student outcomes, attendance, retention, and graduation for use in quality assurance and management processes as explained in the Quality Assurance Policy. The student data is extracted from the student information system. The Student Recruitment and the Student Affairs Unit share responsibility for the accuracy of student data. The Student Recruitment Unit collects data on student profiles. The Director of Student Affairs and the Registrar confirm the accuracy of data entered by the student recruitment team using a student files checklist. The Student Affairs Unit is responsible for calculating progression, success, and drop-out rates. To assure accuracy in data, the QARMO's Data Analyst and the Director also calculate the KPIs and compare them with the values produced by the Student Affairs Unit. QARMO also checks the quality of data through an annual Internal Quality Review and the ADSM Students' File Audit.

7.3 The School makes extensive use of surveys of students and alumni, employers, industrial experts, trustees, and others in the development of programmes. There are student experience surveys, teaching and course evaluation surveys, a graduate exit survey and an alumni survey. There is a student training needs survey to assess student views on their needs for soft skills development.

7.4 QARMO coordinates the surveys and data analysis supported by systems for data cleaning, analysis and visualisation and an annual schedule of surveys as a basis for coordination. The Course Evaluation Surveys are analysed by QARMO and shared with the Academic Dean who, in turn, shares the information with the Programme Directors for consideration. Course evaluations are then considered by the Programme Director through the Programme Critical Self-Evaluation (CSER) process carried out through a specific CSER tool. Eventually, the action plans of the course, programme, Dean, and operational units are captured in the School Quality Improvement Action Plan.

7.5 A course file is maintained for each course as a source of definitive information. The course files are reviewed by programme directors, the Dean's office and the Quality Assurance and Risk Management Office. The review team examined a sample of course files and found them comprehensive.

7.6 The School used its tracking systems to identify relatively high attrition and low retention rates for the MSBA as a relatively new programme. That led to changes in the programme to adjust the balance between technical and management subjects to make it more responsive to the needs of students. The team heard that the School started a process of recording reasons for student withdrawals in 2021 as another tool for managing student retention and progression.

7.7 The institution cites various examples of changes to practices made in response to student feedback, for example the introduction of a large online library database following

student feedback on library services. ADSM gathers student feedback through the MBA student experience survey analysis, the MBA student experience survey and the graduate exit survey.

7.8 Institutional data is reported to, and checked by, the national Centre for Higher Education Data and Statistics (CHEDS) and the School meets CHEDS data definitions as required, such as the accurate CHEDS data submission. The analysis of student cohorts meets CAA 2019 standards for the tracking of student admission, retention, progression, and achievement. The data is discussed in the institutional annual report.

7.9 The recent student information systems are an enabler for the School's commitment to support all aspects of the student and academic lifecycle as well as an enhancement to the embedded commitment to operational planning and monitoring. The review team heard from students of their appreciation of the School's systems as a means of student support and access to services.

7.10 The review team found that every part of the strategic and operational management cycle of the School enables the systematic use of data, leading to the ready identification of risks and quality enhancement. The systematic use of data to support the realisation of the mission and vision of the School is regarded as **good practice** by the review team and therefore Standard 1.7 Information management is **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 There is a comprehensive range of information available on the institutional website which is aligned with the website policy and internal webpages. ADSM's website, along with the course specification, provides sufficient information to prospective and current students about the programmes offered, as well as the selection criteria, programme objectives for each course, the language in which it is taught, and the qualifications it awards.

8.2 Students are provided with a Student Handbook during orientation which provides important information to give an overview of ADSM such as facilities, support systems, data protection and storage, and useful staff contacts.

8.3 The information available to students is easily found and provides the kind of information students most need. Students can access information on their course and the virtual learning environment on their mobile app or on the ADSM website.

8.4 The website is straightforward to navigate, and students and prospective students can find information on the course with ease. This includes being able to see what the entry requirements are, what language the course will be taught in and the course learning outcomes.

8.5 The quality of the website is good and the review team finds the information on the website is clear and the process of updating public information is generally rigorous. However, the review team found details of the School's previous partnership that could be misunderstood as being a current partnership. Therefore, the team **recommends** that ADSM reviews its processes to ensure that the information on the website remains current and accurate.

8.6 ADSM's website, internal webpages, virtual learning environment and Student Handbook provide excellent information for prospective students around admissions, programmes on offer, entry requirements and course specification, which allows a transparent and accurate picture of the School's offer. The review team therefore concludes that Standard 1.8 Public information 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 ADSM monitors all of its courses, programmes, and units annually through its quality assurance system, this monitoring links to the strategic planning process and the setting and monitoring of institutional KPIs (see Standard 1.1). Each unit is responsible for developing 'Unit KPIs' that align with ADSM goals, Critical Success Factors (CSFs), targets for success and tools for measuring targets. The Executive Committee monitors how unit heads report their unit KPIs and evaluate the extent to which their areas are meeting the unit goals.

9.2 The key processes and tools used are the Critical Self-Evaluation Reports (CSER), at course, programme, and unit level, leading to an institutional Quality Improvement Action Plan (QIAP). These programme-level tools sit within the broader institutional framework which includes the Operating Plan and evaluation of faculty and staff themselves as stated in the Quality Assurance Manual. Monitoring extends to professional and service units.

9.3 Faculty members conduct a CSER of the courses for which they are responsible and programme directors complete programme self-evaluation reports. Student feedback is sought through a range of surveys which are conducted following student orientation; as a part of the CSER process; at the point of graduate exit; and focusing on alumni and employers to gauge the impact students are demonstrating at work nine months after graduation. Staff and faculty surveys are also conducted to provide additional focus.

9.4 Quality action plans that arise from this annual process are collated in the School QIAP, which is reviewed on a quarterly basis, with actions specific to and owned at the appropriate level.

9.5 It was clear to the team that the templates provided to faculty for use in the CSER process at course and programme level are directly linked to the School's strategic goals, objectives and institutional KPIs while also allowing for the translation of those KPIs at the academic programme level. In the view of the team, this further strengthens the link between the strategic planning process and the QA system and is regarded as **good practice** (see also Standard 1.1).

9.6 Staff who spoke to the team were candid in their perception of CSERs as burdensome but were clear that they understood their value at both course and programme level as a tool for improvement as well as providing a rich source of evidence for the School to use in external accreditations and evaluations. The team concurred with the view that the process is a valuable one, particularly given the strong evidence that the QIAP is followed up regularly to ensure action and is also embedded in the Operational Plan. The team confirmed in discussions with staff from professional and support services that they also participate in the CSER process at unit level (see also Standard 1.4), thus ensuring a 360-degree evaluation of the student experience.

9.7 In relation to the matter of burden of process on staff, the team was interested to hear that the Internal Quality Review process, which currently runs annually, will operate on a more periodic basis in future with a view to reducing staff burden (see also Standard 1.1).



Staff also confirmed that there is recognition that some projects, such as the IT automation project, will take longer to complete than the normal annual reporting cycle, although the monitoring of these projects is carried out quarterly in the same way as any other actions in the QIAP.

9.8 Students who spoke to the team confirmed that their views were sought regularly via various evaluation questionnaires, to which there is a high response rate, and were able to provide multiple examples of aspects of their programmes and courses that had changed as a result of their feedback. They are also able to provide informal feedback on a day-to-day basis and the team was informed that the aim is to capture the issue where and when it occurs - if this is not possible the matter is picked up formally as there is provision in the CSER template to capture both informal and formal feedback. A similar approach was confirmed by alumni and employers. However, as detailed in Standard 1.1, other than providing feedback, the role of alumni and employers in the QA system and its processes is limited and does not extend to any further involvement in the CSER and QIAP processes.

9.9 A thorough and detailed process of annual monitoring of courses, programmes and support service units is in place, with clear communication of results provided to students and other stakeholders. The team therefore concludes that Standard 1.9 Ongoing monitoring and periodic review of programmes is **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 ADSM has been licensed by the Commission for Academic Accreditation (CAA), an entity within the UAE Ministry of Education (MOE), since 2011. All of its programmes are accredited by the CAA which means that the students' degrees are recognised by the MOE. CAA accreditation of all academic programmes is a requirement of the School's current licensure by the MOE. CAA has evaluated ADSM as being of medium risk, ([www.caa.ae/Pages/Institutes/Details.aspx?GUID=138](http://www.caa.ae/Pages/Institutes/Details.aspx?GUID=138)) which means that it meets the CAA standards and will follow a normal cycle of reviews with a five-year review cycle for institutional licensure. ADSM is also subject to MOE periodic reviews of institutions within the UAE. CAA's website lists ADSM's four graduate programmes as active.

10.2 ADSM is also authorised and periodically re-authorised, via an external evaluation process, by the Abu Dhabi Department of Education & Knowledge (ADEK) for its operations in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi ([www.adek.gov.ae/en/Education-System/Higher-Education/Higher-Education-Institutions](http://www.adek.gov.ae/en/Education-System/Higher-Education/Higher-Education-Institutions)). In addition to its associate membership of AMBA, ADSM is seeking full accreditation by AMBA and is currently on the waiting list to proceed with the accreditation process. In addition, ADSM is pursuing programme-level accreditations through, for example, the British Computer Society, for its MSc Business Analytics programme (MSBA).

10.3 At its meeting with the President of ADSM, the team was informed that, while international accreditation is one of CAA's KPIs for licensed institutions, of equal importance for the School is the benefit that such processes bring in allowing it to achieve its own strategic goals. ADSM, therefore, aims to use its pursuit of a range of local and international accreditations to achieve the twin goals of achieving the CAA label of 'low risk' - meaning that it exceeds those standards - and ensuring that it meets its own goals and objectives of developing its international standing.

10.4 Prior to deciding to undertake QAA's International Quality Review, the School carried out an environmental scanning exercise; as it is already required to undertake a local, compliance-focused accreditation process at both institutional and programme level, it sought to broaden its experience of international reviews by undergoing an accreditation against an internationally recognised framework of standards (the ESG) through a more enhancement-focused review methodology.

10.5 The care and transparency with which the School approached the QAA IQR process and the detailed level of evidence it provided in support of its Self-Evaluation Document, emphasised to the review team the importance of ADSM's statement that it regards quality assurance reviews from external organisations as a key milestone in marking progress to the attainment of its goals and the high value that it attaches to such external evaluations in helping it to improve quality of its provision. In the view of the team, the SED provided for this IQR was thorough and detailed, although, despite reference to the ESG, its focus was on compliance with CAA standards.

10.6 The team encourages ADSM to continue to approach each external evaluation as a means of providing a different lens through which to view its operations and to approach the initial self-evaluation of the School according to the ethos of the framework against which it is being evaluated.

10.7 ADSM is subject to mandatory accreditation processes on a regular basis. It also undertakes other external reviews and accreditations on a voluntary basis and, as evidenced throughout this report, seeks to learn and improve its operations in the light of each experience. The review team concludes that Standard 1.10 Cyclical external quality assurance is **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.

### **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](http://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.

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