



International Quality Review of Macao Polytechnic University

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 [Macao Polytechnic University](#). The review took place from 25 April to 2 May 2022 and was conducted virtually by a team of three reviewers, as follows:

- Mr Matthew Adie (student reviewer)
- Professor Mark Davies
- Dr Nadeem Khan

The QAA Officer for this review was Mr Alan Weale.

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 5.

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

Macao Polytechnic University (MPU) is a public, multidisciplinary higher education institution. Established in 1981, it was formerly known as the University of East Asia Polytechnic Institute, then, in 1991, Macao Polytechnic Institute and in March 2022 it became Macao Polytechnic University. Its motto is 'knowledge, expertise, global vision', indicating aspirations of international excellence in teaching and learning, research development, strategic partnerships and community outreach.

MPU is responsible to the Chief Executive of the Macao Special Administrative Region (Macao SAR), who is Chancellor of MPU, through the Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture. The main legal instrument is the University Charter, which defines the aims, structure, and governing bodies of MPU.

Academic units are responsible for the functions of education, research, outreach and community services, and academic support services. The fundamental academic units, commonly known as faculties, are defined using broad fields of study which are deemed fundamental to MPU's education and research. There are six faculties, namely: Faculty of Applied Sciences; Faculty of Health Sciences and Sports; Faculty of Languages and Translation; Faculty of Arts and Design; Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences; and Faculty of Business. Provision is mainly delivered by these six faculties. Depending on the nature of the subject, the programmes of study are delivered with input from additional independent academic units. Independent academic units, often known as 'Centres', are established with specialised functions to promote the development of selected academic fields deemed strategically important to Macao and the country. These are currently:

- 'One Country Two Systems' Research Centre
- Centre for Gaming and Tourism Studies
- Centre for Portuguese Studies
- Ministry of Education Engineering Research Centre of Applied Technology on Machine Translation and Artificial Intelligence
- International Portuguese Training Centre for Conference Interpreting (established in collaboration with the Directorate General for Interpretation of the European Commission)
- Peking University Health Science Centre-Macao Polytechnic University Nursing Academy
- Teaching and Learning Centre
- Centre for Continuing Education
- Seniors Academy.

MPU offers programmes at bachelor's, master's and doctoral levels. At the time of the review student numbers were circa 4,000 of which 500 were studying at postgraduate levels. MPU plans to further expand its student numbers to 6,000 by 2025. To prepare for this growth, and with governmental support, campus space is being expanded and facilities are being enhanced. A new campus has been acquired recently on Taipa Island and a 15-storey building is due to be completed by 2024. MPU's academic staff team is also being expanded to reflect this planned growth. In particular, recruitment is planned to develop a more diversified staff base.

In reaching conclusions about the extent to which MPU meets the 10 ESG Standards, the review team (the 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 supporting evidence by the University. During the seven-day virtual review visit, which took place on 22, 25 to 29 April and 2 May 2022, a total of 10 meetings were held, comprising the Rector, the senior management team, teaching faculty, support services staff, students, alumni and employers. A virtual tour of the campus and facilities was also undertaken.

In summary, the review team concluded that Macao Polytechnic University **meets** all 10 of the *European Standards and Guidelines (2015), Part 1: Internal Quality Assurance*. The review team found two instances of significant good practice and made seven recommendations for improvement.

QAA's conclusions about Macao Polytechnic University

The QAA review team reached the following conclusions about the higher education provision at Macao Polytechnic University.

European Standards and Guidelines

Macao Polytechnic University meets all of the 10 ESG Standards and Guidelines.

Good practice

The QAA review team identified the following features of **good practice** at Macao Polytechnic University.

- The significant engagement of students in the University's research activity and dissemination (ESG Standard 1.5)
- The comprehensive package of services and facilities to support student learning, wellbeing and development (ESG Standard 1.6).

Recommendations

The QAA review team makes the following **recommendations** to Macao Polytechnic University.

- Ensure a more consistent and robust approach to defining learning outcomes at programme and course level (ESG Standard 1.2)
- Develop a robust and systematic approach to assessing the achievement of learning outcomes (ESG Standard 1.3)
- Ensure a consistent implementation of the University's policy on academic integrity (ESG Standard 1.3)
- Develop appropriate mechanisms to enable the systematic monitoring and evaluation of appeals and their outcomes across the University (ESG Standard 1.3)
- Develop and implement a scheme that facilitates the development of new faculty members in learning, teaching and assessing in higher education (ESG Standard 1.5)
- Make publicly available the minutes of future Council and Council standing committees redacting, as may be appropriate, commercially sensitive and confidential business (ESG Standard 1.8)
- Revise its annual monitoring process and subsequent University oversight arrangements to ensure that student data is consistently presented and used to inform the development of the programme and that all Annual Programme Review Reports include an action plan (ESG Standard 1.9).

Explanation of the findings about Macao Polytechnic University

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 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.

1.1 MPU asserts that its quality assurance framework is based on the UK's Quality Code for Higher Education and that it has adopted an 'outcomes-based approach' to quality. The University's quality framework covers the broader areas of quality assurance that includes new programme development, annual and periodic reviews and amendments to existing programmes. It also deals with the quality mechanisms for student assessment and examinations and the processes for the use of external examiners and advisers. In addition, it addresses the feedback mechanisms and other quality assurance mechanisms to ensure consistency of practice across all programmes and schools.

1.2 MPU's policies and processes for quality assurance are detailed in the Quality Assurance Handbook (QAH). The QAH is available on the public website of the University. The QAH includes policies and processes to promote academic freedom for its faculties and students.

1.3 The self-evaluation document (SED) provided to the team by the University states that MPU has a two-way 'bottom-up' and 'top-down' approach to the management of quality assurance processes for programme planning, designing, approval, monitoring and annual and periodical external review. The Senate is custodian of quality assurance across all functions at MPU and is responsible for its oversight and implementation across the University. At the school level, deans are responsible for the quality assurance of programmes and are supported by the programme coordinators, programme groups and other bodies such as advisory boards and examination boards.

1.4 The Teaching and Learning Centre facilitates the implementation of quality assurance processes at both the institutional level and individual programme level, in addition to its role of assisting in the professional development of faculty and staff. MPU does not assign any one staff member with a quality assurance leadership role with the function coordinated through the Teaching and Learning Centre.

1.5 Students are involved in various activities and committees at the institutional and programme level to ensure their feedback and suggestions are considered. Meetings with senior leaders, faculty, staff and students confirmed awareness and understanding of quality assurance processes was widely present.

1.6 The University engages with a range of external stakeholders, such as employers, business and government through advisory boards, as well as engaging external examiners and external advisers to provide external scrutiny. Externality is also facilitated through the engagement of external quality assurance agencies at periodical intervals to assess the quality of its provision both at the institutional level and at the level of each programme.

1.7 In summary, the review team concludes that MPU has a well defined policy for quality assurance, and it has developed mechanisms and processes to ensure that its programmes and services are continuously monitored. There are mechanisms in place to obtain feedback from internal and external stakeholders including graduates and employers and it is used to make improvements at all levels. Therefore the review 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 MPU's policies and procedures for new programme development, and amendments to existing programmes, are governed through the 'Guidelines for Programme Development, Amendment and Withdrawal'. All programme areas at MPU are broadly mapped to the 'narrow fields' defined in the International Standard Classification of Education (2013) by UNESCO.

2.2 Programme Intended Learning Outcomes (PILOs) are the overarching learning outcomes a student is expected to achieve on completion of the full programme of study. The team noted that the PILOs outlined in the available programme specifications varied in scope and style between programmes. Several programmes also utilised highly generalised PILO phrasing, such as 'to appreciate' and 'to understand' which the University's guidance encourages against. The team was informed that staff are currently provided with training on designing and assessing against intended learning outcomes by the Teaching and Learning Centre and that external examiners were able to comment on the appropriateness of the learning outcomes. However, staff told the team that there was a desire to keep the phrasing of these simple to ensure they were easily understood by staff and students. Overall, the team observed significant confusion across University groups as to how learning outcomes were designed and assessed at MPU. Additionally, students who met with the team also demonstrated limited awareness of the PILOs used within their course. Therefore the team **recommends** that the University ensure a more consistent and robust approach to defining learning outcomes at programme and course level. This should include comprehensive training for staff on MPU's approach to designing and assessing against intended learning outcomes at a programme and course level.

2.3 New programme proposals may be generated from the academic unit, programme team, academic senate or by an individual faculty. The proposal is then discussed within the concerned academic unit or at the institutional level and transformed into a formal proposal by the relevant academic unit in consultation with the stakeholders.

2.4 The guidelines for Programme Development, Amendment and Withdrawal require that all programmes must align with the institutional vision/mission and strategic plan. The guidelines also mandate the requirement for new programme proposals to include an analysis of similar programmes offered in the Macao SAR and to provide the necessary justification to offer a new programme. In addition, the new programme proposal is required to include an analysis of job market needs for the potential graduates. These requirements were widely confirmed by senior management and academic faculty in meetings with the review team.

2.5 The template for new programme proposals includes details such as programme title and description, proposed start date, qualification title, entry requirements, targeted student numbers, workload and the professional affiliation (if any) and programme specifications and syllabi of the different modules making up the programme. The programme proposal also takes into consideration the operational aspects of the

programme in terms of resource identification, learning modules, facilities, faculty and human resource requirements and future employment. Within each academic unit, the responsibility of programme development and management is assigned to a Programme Coordinator.

2.6 Programme faculty have an active and key role in designing new programmes and MPU also engages industry partners and employers in the design of programmes and additionally involves these partners in the delivery of learning experiences such as internships. The University involves students in decision making for new programme proposals, a fact verified by students in both the student submission and in meetings the team held with students.

2.7 The new programme proposal passes through several layers of endorsement and approvals starting from the respective academic unit to the University Administrative Board. After the proposal is approved by the University Administrative Board, an ad hoc programme validation panel is established by Senate. The panel reviews the entire submission and submits its recommendation to the Senate. Final approval is sought from Macao SAR Government.

2.8 MPU publishes approved programme specification information including the objectives, PILOs, the study plan and study workload for each of its programmes on the University's website.
(https://www.mpu.edu.mo/teaching_learning/en/programme_specifications.php)

2.9 Overall, the team concluded that MPU has a clear and robust framework for the design and approval of new programmes. In addition to meeting the regulatory requirements of the Macao SAR, programme design is aligned with the UK Quality Code and as a consequence with the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area. Meetings with senior management, faculty and students confirmed a sound understanding of the process by all. Based on the evidence, the review team 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 MPU's educational philosophy is defined within the University's Charter and is distilled into eight ideal graduate attributes which express the skills and competencies all students are expected to develop throughout the course of their studies. Students are supported to gain experience across the eight attributes through the learning opportunities the University provides as part of the formal and wider curriculum. The team noted that there is evidence of students, as well as wider stakeholders such as employers and industry, having been involved in both defining and reviewing the continuing appropriateness of the University's Graduate Attributes.

3.2 The SED explains that the University employs an outcomes-based approach. Programme Intended Learning Outcomes (PILOs) are formulated against three compulsory components: academic content, disciplinary skills and attributes. Students are supported to gain experience across the eight attributes through the learning opportunities the University provides as part of the formal and wider curriculum.

3.3 MPU expects students to be actively engaged within the programme development process. Programme leaders who met with the team indicated that surveys are often used to gather students' opinions on course and programme proposals, with the results of these often embedded within the programme documentation.

3.4 MPU commits to ensuring its 'curricula are inclusive and student-centred taking account of a diversity of student needs'. As such, MPU makes available dedicated support to disabled students and those with special educational needs, with combined services across Registry, the Student Affairs Office and IT working to ensure reasonable accommodations can be made.

3.5 MPU notes its commitment to ensuring its provision encompasses a 'suitable mixture and modes of delivery' as may be allowed within each discipline. However, because the Macao SAR centrally regulates the total number of hours and classroom learning hours for credit-bearing provision delivered in the region, the University is required to align with quotas under the regulation for the proportion of hours delivered in a lecture, seminar, project, placement and assessment format.

3.6 Where required, a student is permitted under MPU's academic regulations to extend the duration of their programme up to a maximum of seven years for a bachelor's degree and up to four and six years for master's and doctoral-level study, respectively. MPU notes that this provides students with greater autonomy to adapt the programme around their own needs.

3.7 MPU assigns a Year Tutor to all undergraduate and postgraduate master's students upon commencing their studies. It is the responsibility of these Tutors to provide specific academic advice and support to students across the duration of their studies at MPI. An equivalent approach is taken for doctoral students, with each assigned an Academic Advisor who performs a similar academic advisory role. The University notes that staff appointed to these roles tend to have considerable experience as academic members of staff. Undergraduate and postgraduate taught students who met with the team demonstrated a sound understanding of the Year Tutor role and highlighted the valuable support these

individuals offered. Students noted that Year Tutors were very approachable and took an active interest in students' experience at MPU. However, the team noted that doctoral students did not demonstrate a similar awareness of the equivalent Academic Advisor role but indicated existing academic supervision arrangements were sufficient.

3.8 The University strongly encourages students to 'individualise' their own learning experience, through participation in local and international competitions. The Student Affairs Office takes responsibility for organising these extracurricular activities, which frequently include seminars, field trips, outreach schemes and contests. MPU also offers scholarships to students who have demonstrated outstanding academic and non-academic performance as a means of recognising their achievements. Students highlighted the variety of student clubs and societies that were offered by the University. It was indicated that participating in these initiatives often provided students with the opportunity to build their personal skills such as their confidence.

3.9 The assessment methods used at programme and course level are designed as part of the programme development and approval process. The continuing appropriateness of these methods is considered formally through the Annual Programme Monitoring and Review process and the seven-yearly Programme Re-Accreditation Review.

3.10 All instruments of assessments are subject to approval by external examiners, who are asked to confirm each assessment is appropriately set in terms of complexity and challenge and enables students to demonstrate attainment of the intended learning outcomes of the programme. This ensures comparable standards in assessment between MPU and other higher education institutes. Examination scripts are also personally approved by the Chair of the relevant Programme Examination Board to ensure appropriate institutional oversight of assessment.

3.11 Assessment rubrics outline the specific marking criteria for a given assessment. While the University does not use a single standardised rubric, there was evidence that these are standardised at programme and discipline level. Students can utilise these rubrics, in addition to the University's Assessment Governance Framework, to better understand how their assessments will be graded and the regulations underpinning the delivery of assessment at MPU. Students indicated to the team that MPU's rubrics were valuable and helped ensure sufficient information was made available to them to understand how their learning would be assessed.

3.12 Despite this, the team observed that students had very limited understanding of the intended learning outcomes associated with their programmes and courses. Students were not able to demonstrate how the marking criteria within their assessments could be used to evidence their attainment of the learning outcomes. Similarly, the team detected significant confusion between groups of staff as to how the University assessed against the intended learning outcomes (the more detailed outcomes associated with a course that forms part of a programme), including whether a student was expected to evidence attainment of all intended learning outcomes to secure a pass for a given module. While the University was able to clarify to the team its policy in this area, the team observed limited shared understanding between staff. The team therefore **recommends** the University to develop a robust and systematic approach to assessing the achievement of learning outcomes. In doing so, the University should consider how it can best establish an effective shared understanding of the new approach across staff and students.

3.13 MPU does not set a single, cross-institutional policy governing the timeliness of the return of feedback to students on their assessments. Instead, individual faculties have the freedom to apply their own policies based on the assessment methods used. This was confirmed by staff who indicated that often the nature of how feedback was delivered would

vary between courses, again depending on the assessment methods used. Students who met with the team confirmed that feedback was provided quickly by the University, and that this was often of a high quality that supported them in reflecting on their areas of strength within a particular assignment, as well as identifying areas for further development.

3.14 Programme Examination Boards have formal responsibility for agreeing the results of students' individual assessments and for monitoring the academic performance of each student cohort within assessment. Where a student's performance may have been adversely affected by extenuating circumstances, the Examination Boards will also consider claims made under this policy and agree appropriate mitigating actions as may be necessary. MPU's academic regulations for undergraduate and postgraduate master's provision permit students to miss up to 20% of the scheduled learning activities or assessments on the basis of mitigating circumstances. Similarly, for doctoral students there is the ability to renegotiate deadlines in response to specific extenuating circumstances, such as pregnancy or severe illness.

3.15 The University takes steps to ensure the academic integrity of students' work which is submitted through the use of plagiarism-detection software. Despite this, the team identified through the course of the review, that the University lacks a consistent shared understanding of the threshold at which a similarity measure provided within the software would be indicative of academic misconduct. The team understood that instead, faculties have the discretion to apply their own threshold, with the Faculty of Arts and Design setting this at 30% and the Faculty of Health Sciences applying different thresholds between undergraduate and postgraduate provision. While the University was able to clarify this position towards the end of the review, the team noted the significant confusion between staff. The team therefore **recommends** that the University ensures consistent implementation of its policy on academic integrity.

3.16 Students play an active role in the assurance and enhancement of the learning experience at MPU. Student Reps are elected at a programme level and are responsible for representing the view of their cohorts to the University, acting as a liaison between the relevant Year Tutor and student peers. Programme Reps will be invited to attend meetings arranged by their academic unit, as appropriate, and will be responsible for gathering and presenting student views on particular issues, as well as communicating back MPU's response to students.

3.17 At an institutional level, student views are represented by the Elected Officers of the MPU Students Union (MPU SU). Founded in 1993, MPU SU is an independent entity led by a Leadership Team elected annually by MPU students who present student views in aggregate to the University. The University supports the development of MPU SU through the Student Affairs Office, who partner closely with the Students Union on its activities.

3.18 The primary mechanism through which student feedback is considered by the University are the Student Dialogue meetings which are arranged annually at institutional level and semesterly at school level. Evidence provided by the University indicates a wide ranging and productive discussion between staff and student representatives at institutional level. MPU notes that the proactive approach taken to gathering feedback from students and addressing their concerns has resulted in historically low volumes of formal complaints. Students told the team that their voice was heard by staff within these dialogue meetings, additionally students could identify where the University had made changes to its academic provision or the services it provides in response to student feedback in the dialogue meetings.

3.19 In response to a recent change in the legislation governing higher education in Macao, the role of students in the governance of the University has been further formalised,

with students now represented formally on the Council and as non-voting attendees of the University Senate. At a faculty-level, students are also included as invited members of the Faculty Pedagogic Committee. Council members and student representatives were provided with some training prior to taking up their role.

3.20 MPU frequently reviews the appropriateness of the learning opportunities it offers by surveying students about their educational experience. The Taught Course and Teaching Evaluation Survey asks for student views about the academic staff delivering their course, the quality of learning module and opportunities offered, and the facilities available for supporting their learning. An equivalent survey is used for those completing their thesis or graduation project and reviews the support provided from their supervisor, the value of their thesis or projects and the facilities available for completing it. Students met by the team demonstrated an awareness of these surveys and indicate they were a key means through which students could provide feedback on their studies at MPU.

3.21 The University provides information to students on its academic appeals and complaints procedures through the University's website and the student handbook. New students are informed of these procedures as part of their induction activities and can approach their Year Tutors for further information throughout the course of their studies. Standardised forms are used by the University for both complaints and appeals. Students met by the team indicated that they were aware of these policies and procedures and were confident in being able to access information on these should they wish to submit an appeal or complaint.

3.22 Institutional oversight of complaints is managed by the Academic Affairs Department, who analyse trends in complaints received on a monthly basis. A formal analysis of received complaints and agreed follow-up actions is reviewed annually by the Administrative Board. MPU also makes its responses to complaints and follow-up actions publicly available via the University website to ensure transparency. The team noted that the University's approach to handling complaints was robust, with appropriate procedures in place to ensure fair and thorough consideration of complaints raised.

3.23 The team learned that appeals relating to assessment and credit transfer are adjudicated primarily by the relevant academic unit, with credit transfer decisions subject to ratification by the Academic Qualification Committee. The University commits to informing students of the outcome of their appeal within three weeks of filing. The team noted that while appropriate mechanisms were in place to monitor and analyse the pattern of student complaints, a similar approach was not taken for student appeals. To this effect, the team **recommends** the University to develop appropriate mechanisms to enable the systematic monitoring and evaluation of appeals and their outcomes across the University.

3.24 Overall, the team was satisfied with the robustness of the University's complaints and appeals procedures, on the basis that clear guidelines were made available to students and that students demonstrated a reasonable awareness of these to the team.

3.25 The team noted holistic evidence of a student-centred approach to programme design and delivery. Furthermore, there was considerable evidence that MPU has invested in creating an inclusive learning environment, underpinned by an effective student support system that assists students to actively participate within the learning experience at all stages of their studies. Further work is required to improve institutional practices around the design and assessment of learning outcomes, and to establish a stronger shared understanding of University policy with respect to academic integrity. Notwithstanding the above recommendations, the review team was satisfied that the threshold for this standard, 1.3: Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment is **met**.

Standard 1.4 Student admission, progression, recognition and certification

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

Findings

4.1 MPU maintains an institutional Admissions Policy which is overseen by the Senate and published on the University website. This policy outlines the overall institutional approach and process for admission to the University, including MPU's commitment to admit students with 'the ability to benefit from the chosen programme, and fair and equal treatment for all applicants'.

4.2 The individual admissions criteria and decisions for each programme of study are set and managed by the relevant academic school. MPU's Registry plays a critical role within the admissions process, partnering closely with the academic schools to support the setting of admissions criteria and assuring the effective implementation of process.

4.3 Applicants can access further information on MPU's admissions procedure and criteria through the University's prospectus, website and dedicated admissions website. These provide information to applicants on the specific entry requirements, admissions routes and selection principles for each programme of study. Students told the team that sufficient information was provided to them at the point of application to inform their decision to study their chosen degree programme at MPU.

4.4 Prospective students can apply to have relevant prior learning and experience, or academic credits awarded from an alternative higher education provider, recognised by MPU prior to commencing their intended studies. Such applications are considered by the relevant school as well as the University Senate's Academic Qualification Committee.

4.5 The University's approach to recognising prior learning is governed centrally by the Macao Special Administrative Region (SAR) through Administrative Regulation No 19/2018. This sets a strict ceiling on the total number of credits that can be recognised for any award, limiting recognition to no more than one third of the total credits required for graduation in the specified programme of study.

4.6 MPU offers a comprehensive induction programme for new students, providing them with information about both their programme of study and owning faculty as well as the wider services and opportunities open to students across the University. Students told the team that the University's induction programme has provided them with sufficient information and support to aid their transition into studying with MPU. Undergraduate students also noted that in some cases students had been assigned a specific mentor to assist them in adapting to student life at MPU.

4.7 The University's approach to the assessment and award of academic credit is outlined within the Assessment Governance Framework of MPU's Assessment Strategy, which provides information on the principles underpinning assessment and the criteria and grading system against which student work will be evaluated. The regular review and evaluation of this strategy sits as a responsibility of MPU's Senate.

4.8 The University monitors student performance primarily through their annual programme monitoring and review exercise, through which programme staff are expected to critically reflect upon students' performance, including any academic problems and achievements. From the sample of annual programme monitoring forms provided by the University, the team noted that quality of commentary provided in respect of student

progression was found to be variable between programmes, with some programmes providing full statistical analyses of student progression, and others more limited commentary.

4.9 Student performance data is collected centrally by the Pedagogic and Research Affairs Office, and a cross-institutional analysis is considered by the Senate on an annual basis. The team recognised that this was a comprehensive analysis of student performance but noted that the analysis extended only to first and final year undergraduate students and did not include those at other stages of their programme. Additionally, it was a summative annual analysis of performance similar to that provided at programme level through the annual programme monitoring reports. The team therefore encourages the University to consider how its student data systems could be further developed to provide more real-time oversight of student performance to assist in the identification of at-risk students.

4.10 While MPU does not apply a formal system of student progression for its undergraduate and non-doctoral postgraduate students, individual programmes or learning modules can apply specific prerequisite requirements that a student will be expected to meet prior to enrolment. Failure to meet these prerequisites may result in a material delay to a student's intended timeline for completing their studies with MPU. Programme Exam Boards hold formal responsibility for considering the performance and progression of students each year.

4.11 At doctoral level, students will be formally progressed to confirmed candidature only upon the completion of any required coursework, receipt of a research proposal and through successful completion of a confirmatory examination. Upon having their candidature confirmed, students are expected to submit a biannual progress report to their supervisor. Students failing to demonstrate satisfactory progress on two or more occasions will be withdrawn. Again, the University's annual programme monitoring review process is used to track and reflect on student performance each year.

4.12 Where a student obtains all the required credits of a specific programme of study, they will be conferred an award by the University. Awards are granted by the Awards Board upon the recommendation of the Programme Examination Board, which is in turn endorsed by the Degree Examination Board. Awards conferred by the Awards Board are subject to consideration and approval by the respective Academic School's Pedagogic Committee, which has a formal remit to 'consider and approve the list of graduates of the academic concerned and the conferral of degrees'. The team considered this as an effective means of the University assuring itself of the standards of its awards.

4.13 Upon graduating from the University, students will receive a gazetted degree certificate which recognises the named student has obtained all the requirements for the prescribed degree.

4.14 The University's arrangements for handling student admissions and securing the standards of their academic awards are robust. While the University's decision not to apply a formal approach to progression is perfectly acceptable, enhancing the University's processes for in-session monitoring of student performance would be prudent to reduce the risk associated with student non-continuation. Overall, the review team concludes 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 University's staff population is composed of 271 academic and 309 administrative staff. MPU additionally employs 180 individuals, drawn from across industry, to support the delivery of the University's programmes. This supports the University in maintaining a staff:student ratio of 1:14, which the University views as 'comparable to HEIs worldwide'. The team noted that 87% of MPU's academic staff are recruited on a teaching and research basis, with the remaining 13% involved only with teaching.

5.2 The University's staff policy is defined within its Personnel Charter, which outlines the key responsibilities of academic staff at each of the University's four ranks: Professor, Associate Professor, Lecturer and Teaching Assistant. The Charter also details the process through which MPU recruits and selects new staff at each rank, as well as the criteria for promotion and assessment. Staff demonstrated an awareness of these policies and made frequent reference to the Personnel Charter as a key source of information about the terms of their employment with the University.

5.3 MPU advertises staff vacancies through the University's website, as well as the local and international press. The University provides comprehensive job descriptions that clarify the scope of each advertised role, including likely teaching responsibilities and the experience and qualifications expected of the successful candidate. The team learned that the University is actively looking to diversify and internationalise its staff population within the coming years.

5.4 MPU's procedures for evaluating applicants for vacant positions and selecting new staff is rigorous and highly formalised, with the University convening an Examination Committee to manage the selection of an appropriate candidate for each advertised position. The membership of these committees is typically drawn from across senior colleagues within the relevant discipline of the advertised role. The Administrative Board or Senate, depending on whether the vacancy is administrative or academic, will be asked to formally endorse the membership of the Examination Committee convened for each vacancy. Prospective applicants are informed of the membership of their Examination Committee through the provided job description.

5.5 The team found the University's policies and practices for the recruitment and selection of staff to be in line with industry standards. Noting the University's plans to significantly grow its student numbers in the coming years, the team welcomed confirmation that the University intends to simultaneously increase academic staff numbers to ensure a consistent quality of student experience in the future.

5.6 The University's Academic Staff Performance Reporting System is used to track staff performance across teaching, research outputs and institutional services. The purposes for which data is held in this system are explained to staff within MPU's Guidelines on Academic Staff Performance Tracking. The team learned that staff performance across each of these dimensions is considered holistically within annual performance review discussions with Academic Heads. This data is also used to inform the personal development needs and contract renewals decisions of individual staff.

5.7 MPU also evaluates staff performance within teaching through a consideration of both student feedback surveys and peer class observations, both of which are administrated centrally by the Pedagogic and Research Affairs Office. The University noted that the class observation process was designed to be enhancement focused 'enabling academic staff to review their professional practice from different points of view to better promote student learning'. Staff met by the team indicated that all staff were expected to undergo peer class observation and that this was a valuable exercise.

5.8 Outcomes of class observations are reported to the relevant Programme Coordinator and Director of the academic unit, with the Senate also receiving aggregated reporting on the outcomes of class observation. Where the outcome of an observation is unsatisfactory, the University will follow up under its 'Procedures for Dealing with Unsatisfactory Teaching Performance', which can result in the impacted member of staff being supported to participate in further training and development opportunities.

5.9 Staff are encouraged by MPU to engage with professional development opportunities that support their growth as researchers and teaching practitioners. The Teaching and Learning Centre is responsible for designing and delivering an annual programme of staff development opportunities aligned to the University's guidelines on Academic Staff Development Opportunities and with the development needs highlighted through annual staff performance reviews.

5.10 The Teaching and Learning Centre structures the opportunities it delivers around five strategic themes: effective teaching and learning; research; academic expertise; quality assurance and management; and use of technology in teaching. Staff who met with the team confirmed that the Teaching and Learning Centre provided a broad offering of development opportunities, and specifically noted the University's supportive culture for engaging with both internal and external development opportunities. However, the team found it difficult to establish from meetings with staff that they deployed modern pedagogic techniques and could detect no scheme that develops new academic staff in the principles and practice of learning and teaching. The team also heard that new staff could learn these important aspects of understanding and skills through working with more experienced staff, or that previous experience (notwithstanding its quality) was sufficient to teach in the University. Accordingly the team **recommends** that the University develops and implements a scheme that facilitates the development of new faculty members in learning, teaching and assessing in higher education.

5.11 The team learned that 75% of MPU's academic staff currently hold a doctoral degree and that, as part of the University's Development Plan, MPU planned to increase the proportion to 90% by 2025. In line with this target, the University extends a range of financial support to staff to enable their participation at academic conferences or engagement with doctoral-level study. Again, staff indicated to the team that this was illustrative of the supportive culture at MPU.

5.12 The team concluded that MPU has robust systems for managing the performance of academic staff within teaching, noting specifically the opportunity for student and peer feedback to inform the enhancement of pedagogy and practice. There was evidence of MPU offering a variety of development opportunities to its staff, with an appropriate level of participation demonstrated.

5.13 The University recognised that increasing the linkage of its research and teaching activities was a key growth area for the immediate future. The team noted that at the time of the review, MPU was in the process of extending and building out its research capabilities as a University, with its overall policy and development plan identifying the enhancement of teaching through academic staff research as a key objective for 2025.

5.14 MPU has put in place a Research Development Action Plan to guide attainment of this objective, which includes a commitment to increase its recognition of staff research performance and enhancing its practices to support and retain research intensive academics. Additionally, the action plan identifies a goal of attracting a greater number of high-quality doctoral students to the University and build stronger collaborative activities with research.

5.15 Recognising the University was at an early stage of this journey, the team noted the extensive opportunities already available to both undergraduate and postgraduate students to become involved in the research activities of the University. This had previously included opportunities for students to author and co-author research papers with academic staff as well as attending and presenting at academic conferences. MPU drew attention to the creation of a Research Capabilities Enhancement Scheme for postgraduate students which would encourage their engagement within the University's research activity and equip students with valuable practical research skills. The team formed the opinion that the significant engagement of students in the University's research activity and dissemination is **good practice**.

5.16 Innovative pedagogical practice is identified and disseminated by the University in a highly structured and formalised way, with academics and administrative staff invited to nominate strategies, plans and approaches that have demonstrated a positive impact on students' learning opportunities. Each nomination received through this scheme undergoes external peer review and scrutiny by MPU's Senate before being published on the MPU website. The team noted that in previous years this had enabled the identification of, on average, one example of good practice per year.

5.17 The University also operates a Teaching Excellence Awards Scheme which had previously rewarded individual staff, but now focuses on recognising the achievements of wider teaching teams. The goal of the scheme remains to promote the enhancement of teaching quality across the University. Staff indicated to the team that the scope of these awards was dynamic and that a new award to recognise teaching excellence in e-learning had recently been introduced by the University.

5.18 While recognising these schemes provided a highly structured approach to identifying and sharing good practice, the team explored with staff whether more informal mechanisms existed across the University to support a culture of sharing good practice. The team learned that a number of informal opportunities exist for staff to gather feedback from students and colleagues on their teaching delivery. However, the team encourages the University to consider what opportunities may exist to further foster a culture where innovation in pedagogical practice is routinely recognised and shared by staff in a wider and more informal way.

5.19 In response to the recent COVID-19 pandemic, MPU has adapted the delivery of provision at short notice to adopt more online and blended learning approaches. Staff who met the team noted that the University's Learning Management System (LMS), CANVAS, has been a key tool in enabling MPU to deliver virtual, in-person, and blended learning opportunities to students across the duration of the pandemic. Capabilities are available within the LMS to support the dissemination of learning materials to students, as well as the integration of videoconferencing functionalities. The team learned that new staff are provided with dedicated training, as part of their induction, to assist them in leveraging the functionalities available in CANVAS to support delivery of their teaching.

5.20 Robust procedures are in place for handling the recruitment and selection of new academic staff, with appropriate mechanisms in place to manage the performance of

academic staff so as to provide assurance that staff have and sustain the capabilities and competence to teach. Overall, the review team concluded that 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 MPU is funded by the Macao government. The SED asserts that the University has 'stable financial conditions to ensure sustainable operation of the institution in line with our vision and mission'. It further states that the MPU campuses (Macao Peninsula and Taipa Island) are equipped with appropriate physical resources including teaching and learning facilities, libraries, research facilities, sports facilities, IT infrastructure, student accommodation, and recreational facilities. As a publicly funded University, MPU has invested in the physical infrastructure and equipment to meet its needs.

6.2 MPU states that students receive comprehensive support throughout their stay. The scope of support services ranges from academic support, counselling, learning support, advising and employability services. MPU has a well resourced library with 24-hour access for automated issuance and returns facilities. Students can instantly access library services through social media platforms 'WhatsApp' and 'WeChat'. The Information Technology helpdesk is available for 12 hours a day for any technical support for both students and staff. MPU has employed a CANVAS learning management system to complement face-to-face teaching.

6.3 The team was provided with a live virtual tour of the Macao campus facilities. The tour included live-streaming of key facilities with an opportunity to ask questions. The tour also included major laboratories such as the Nursing laboratory, Artificial Intelligence laboratory, Gaming laboratory, Engineering Research Centre of Applied Technology on Machine Translation and Artificial Intelligence as well as the Joint Centre in Ubiquitous Computing with UCLA - Henry Samuel School of Engineering and Applied Sciences.

6.4 Hostel facilities are available for students who do not live locally. Recreational facilities such as a snooker table, table tennis, and vending machines are available to the students. The University also has an Alumni association office and a Students Union Office to support student activities. The provision of this wide range of resources at an appropriate level was confirmed during team meetings with the students who spoke positively about the contribution the resources make to their overall learning experience. The review concluded the comprehensive package of services and facilities to support student learning, well-being and development is **good practice**.

6.5 With governmental support, MPU is to expand significantly over the next two years owing to projected future growth in enrolments. The expansion is due to be complete in 2024. A new facility is being constructed on the Macao peninsula and comprises a 15-storey building with 37,000 square metres of the area to be included in its use for teaching, learning and research.

6.6 To ensure that resource provision continues to meet the needs of students and staff, MPU carries out periodical surveys to collect stakeholders' satisfaction and feedback for its services. The results of these surveys form the part of annual programme review reports. Students confirmed to the team that their feedback is taken into consideration to make improvements.

6.7 The academic support unit of the University comprises Student Registry, Student Affairs Office, Pedagogic And Research Affairs and the Library. The Administrative Unit

includes finance, information technology, campus maintenance and infrastructure. MPU offers several opportunities for professional development and growth of support staff. The personnel office carries out an annual survey to identify the areas for professional development for the support staff.

6.8 The team concluded that appropriate funding for learning and teaching activities was available and put to appropriate use. The University ensures that adequate and readily accessible learning resources and student support are provided and that the comprehensive provision is good practice. The review team therefore 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 MPU notes that 'Effective use of management information is crucial to safeguarding quality and standards as well as to promoting enhancement of student learning opportunities, underpinning and evidencing sound decision-making'. It states that relevant information is collected and used as part of the review process at all levels, including module review, annual programme monitoring reviews, examination boards, and Senate meetings.

7.2 The University indicated that student enrolment, performance, and retention data is reviewed annually as part of the annual programme review process, the data being stored in the University's electronic systems. However, the template used asks for qualitative comments only, rather than an exposition of the data with explanatory text. Without the instruction to provide or comment on a specific data set, the quality of the information supplied and discussed varies considerably across programmes. It is also possible that selective reporting takes place, and the data is not used to full extent. The team heard that data contained in annual programme review reports is used to identify issues discussed subsequently at faculty pedagogic committees. The University also stated that oversight of student performance and retention data is maintained by Senate through its examination of individual annual programme review reports, rather than an examination of summary data. The variable quality of information presented to it compromises the ability of Senate to maintain an overview of student performance across programmes. Executive summaries of programme annual monitoring reports are produced for bachelor's, master's and doctoral programmes, but with a very coarse granularity that prohibits the meaningful examination of data (see also paragraph 9.3 and recommendation).

7.3 Student applications and admissions data is held by the Registry, which produces an annual overall summary data table giving recruitment to bachelor's, master's and doctoral levels. A more detailed report showing data by faculty is discussed at Senate, along with graduate employability data. The team heard from Council members that recruitment data is discussed at Council although Council minutes did not reflect this claim. Information on overall student progression and achievement is managed by the Academic Affairs Department, which produces an annual report on some aspects of student performance. Admissions data is considered and analysed, as required, as part of external accreditation procedures.

7.4 The University collects data by survey from students at module and programme levels. Data is also collected on the opinion of students and academic and administrative staff on professional services. Students in Years 1 and 4 are also canvassed on their overall educational experience, the results of which are discussed at Senate, which has instigated changes as a result. Detailed reports are produced annually on each of these, though in some reports information is compiled by means of Likert scale data, which is arithmetically invalid, and the University may wish to address this, perhaps by considering distributions of data or modes, as is done in other reports. The consideration of means masks the more interesting results that show either great satisfaction/agreement or dissatisfactions/disagreements. The University compiles a comprehensive report of its annual graduate employment survey, the most recent of which, produced in January 2021, showed a response rate of approximately 72%.

7.5 The team heard that when data is available it is capitalised upon, and the University supplied specific, detailed and convincing examples of where it had taken notice of poor survey results from students and swift remedial action had followed. The examples concerned underperformance by teaching staff, a high failure rate in a programme, and the provision of timetables earlier than hitherto. Also the University responded swiftly and positively to feedback from a graduate survey that recommended the inclusion of more modern coding tools in the computing curriculum.

7.6 Overall, the review team concludes that the University is, in general, collecting, analysing and using most of the relevant information for the effective management of its programmes, and accordingly 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 Prospective students can access information about MPU and the programmes of study it offers through the University prospectus. This document outlines both the formal academic calendar and MPU's ideal graduate attributes. A Statement on Student Expectations is also provided which has been co-authored by MPU and its Students' Union to provide transparency to applicants on what they can expect from the University and in turn, what MPU expects from them. The prospectus also includes information on the individual programmes of study offered by the University, including the intended learning outcomes, learning content and assessment criteria required to gain an award. MPU's Registry is responsible for managing the annual update and publication of these documents in partnership with relevant business units.

8.2 The University also operates a dedicated Admissions' website, through which applicants can access further information in respect of the entry requirements for each programme, available admissions routes, and the principles for admission selection. Students who met the team indicated that sufficient information was available to them at the point of application to support them in making an informed decision to study their chosen degree programme with MPU.

8.3 Current students can access information on institutional policies, procedures and regulations through the student handbook. Bespoke handbooks exist for undergraduate and postgraduate level provision, with each providing comprehensive information on the institution, its academic calendar, rules, regulations and operational policies. Students can also access information on the student services provided by the University, such as the Student Counselling Service and Services for Students with Disabilities. These documents are published in both English and Chinese. The Student Affairs Office is responsible for reviewing the content of the handbooks with the relevant business units to ensure their accuracy and consistency. Students indicated to the team that these handbooks had been a useful resource in supporting their initial orientation within the University.

8.4 MPU also publishes information relevant to the delivery of its provision through the Student Information Web Portal (SIWeb), which provides students with direct access to their timetables and academic results. Students who met with the team made some reference to SIWeb but demonstrated a wider awareness of the various University support mechanisms that were available to them should they have a concern of enquiry (such as Year Tutor, Student Support Services, and Registry).

8.5 The MPU website acts as a public-facing portal for information on the University's structure, governance, and policies including the University's Quality Guidelines, procedures and policies.

8.6 MPU assures the accuracy and relevancy of its public information by allocating responsibility for maintaining institutional information to the Institutional Affairs Department, while responsibility for school-level information is delegated to the relevant Programme Coordinators and School Directors. The Teaching and Learning Centre and Academic Affairs Department share joint responsibility for maintaining public information about the University's approach to quality assurance. The team noted in its review of evidence linked to the University website, that while the information provided online was accurate and

current, a number of dead links were present on the website which impacts upon the availability of information. The team encourages MPU to regularly review the website to ensure such dead links are eliminated.

8.7 The University makes available to staff and students the minutes of most of its institutional committees with the exception of the University Council and Council Standing Committee. While recognising that some of the business discussed by these forums could be commercially sensitive, the team formed the view that more could be done by the University to ensure appropriate transparency to internal and external stakeholders about relevant Council business and decisions. Therefore the team **recommends** that the University makes publicly available the minutes of future Council and Council Standing Committees redacting, as may be appropriate, commercially sensitive and confidential business.

8.8 Furthermore, the team learned during the review that committee minutes are primarily published in Chinese, with translated copies only available to staff upon request. Recognising that this had the ability to limit the access of certain staff to University information, the team would encourage the University to ensure that all minutes are readily accessible, in terms of language, by all staff.

8.9 In general, information about MPU's activities, including programmes, is clear, accurate, objective and up-to date. However, further work is required to ensure that published information can be accessed by all relevant parties, irrespective of language differences, and that website links are readily maintained. Overall, the review team 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 MPU does not carry out internal periodic programme review as it is not mandated by the Macao Government regulations. MPU relies on external accreditation agencies as a means of periodic review of its programmes. The University has pledged that each programme will be externally reviewed at least once in every seven years. At the time of the virtual review visit not all programmes had yet been externally reviewed although plans are in place to complete the external review of the remaining programmes within the next three years.

9.2 Internally, MPU carries out an annual programme review for each of its programmes. The annual programme review guidelines and template contain information about student enrolment, student performance, incremental changes to learning modules, assessment of student results and academic standards, issues raised by supervisors, student support activities, staffing and resources, overall evaluation and action plans for further improvement. MPU regularly collates survey data from students, staff, alumni, and graduates, which is used by the faculty in the annual programme review reports.

9.3 Sample Annual Programme Review Reports viewed by the team revealed that the completion of the forms is not standardised, and faculty can select or omit the data they choose. For instance, student progression is explained differently in different reports. One report addresses progression in terms of analysis of mean GPA achievement, whereas a similar section in another programme discusses withdrawal rates and failing rates. Such variation in reporting is present in other sections of the reports as well, for example sections about Staff, Resources and Teaching and Learning. The Annual Programme Review Guidelines also require taught programmes to include an action plan setting out measures to be taken with an indicative timeframe to solve problems and enhance the quality of the programme. Such action plans were not present in all Annual Programme Review Reports seen by the team. The review team, therefore, **recommends** the University to revise its annual monitoring process and subsequent University oversight arrangements to ensure that student data is consistently presented and used to inform the development of the programme and that all Annual Programme Review Reports include an action plan.

9.4 Prior to the seven-year accreditation review, MPU invites external advisers to comment on the programme and proposed development, which serves as an additional layer of assurance before the mandatory review is carried out.

9.5 The review team concludes that the annual programme review process, together with the processes associated with the seven-year external review fulfil the requirements to review programmes to ensure that they achieve the objectives set for them and respond to the needs of students and society and that therefore 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 Cyclical reviews of higher education institutions in Macao are yet to be properly established, although the Macao Education and Youth Development Bureau is currently rolling out an initial programme of review activity following a process that considers more than quality assurance, for example a scrutiny of the institution's financial controls. The University is among the very first institutions to subject itself to this review, which occurred concurrently with the present IQR. The outcomes of the review are not in the public domain at the time of producing this report. Nonetheless, the willingness of the University to participate speaks to its desire to learn from external review.

10.2 In the then absence of external quality review in Macao, the University formulated its own external review process, and a review was conducted in 2006, using international academic experts as reviewers. In 2013 the University engaged QAA to perform an Institutional Review. That review identified six items of good practice, four recommendations and three affirmations (actions that the then Institute was already taking to make academic standards secure and/or improve the educational provision offered to its students). In 2019 the University published on its website an action plan indicating briefly how it had responded to the recommendations and affirmations, and how it had continued to develop its good practice items. Some students met by the team reported that they had been influenced to study at the University by its engagement with QAA. That the University has again put itself forward for review by QAA in this IQR demonstrates a willingness to participate in cyclical review processes.

10.3 There are 29 academic programmes at bachelor's, master's and PhD levels, 15 have been reviewed and/or accredited by external agencies, including professional bodies, from Australia, China, Hong Kong SAR, New Zealand, Portugal, UK, USA and Taiwan. The University explained that the purpose of such (cyclical) review is to benchmark the University's quality with the higher education standards of the countries or regions that host the reviewing/accrediting bodies. This shows a considerable commitment to external validation of standards and quality at programme level.

10.4 The University has shown and continues to show a commitment to external quality review broadly in line with the Part 1 ESGs and thus 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 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.

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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