

Translation
Version

Higher Education Quality Evaluation of Macao

Guidelines on Program Accreditation

Higher Education Bureau

Government of Macao Special Administrative Region

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List of Abbreviations

| | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| EQAA | external quality assurance agency |
| DSES | Higher Education Bureau |
| <i>Guidelines for EQAAs</i> | <i>Guidelines for External Quality Assurance Agencies</i> |
| HEI | higher education institution |
| Macao | Macao Special Administrative Region |
| PA | Program Accreditation |
| Panel | accreditation panel |
| QA | quality assurance |
| Statement | Statement Confirming Fulfillment of Condition(s) |

Preamble

1. This set of guidelines elaborates Program Accreditation (PA) areas, standards, criteria and process to enable higher education institutions (HEIs) in Macao Special Administrative Region (Macao) to make preparation for PA. This set of guidelines also serves as the basis for external quality assurance agencies (EQAAs) to execute PA.
2. The roles and responsibilities of the EQAA and the terms of service are specified in the *Guidelines for External Quality Assurance Agencies (Guidelines for EQAAs)*.
3. Refer to relevant laws and regulations as well as government announcements for details of the higher education quality evaluation system of Macao, financial support and follow-up action, etc.
4. This set of guidelines applies to local higher education programs which have to conduct Program Accreditation according to the provisions of the higher education quality evaluation system, including new programs and existing programs with substantial changes.
5. DSES reserves the right to supplement the terms and conditions in this set of guidelines.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Program Accreditation (PA) is a means of evaluating education quality to determine whether programs offered by higher education institutions (HEIs) can meet the stated program objectives and enable students to achieve the intended learning outcomes so as to ensure that higher education programs meet the quality assurance (QA) requirements of Macao.
- 1.2 This set of guidelines is applicable to programs which have to conduct Program Accreditation according to the provisions of the higher education quality evaluation system as follows:
 - 1.2.1 New programs that are launched by HEIs without the status to self-regulate and offer new programs;
 - 1.2.2 Existing programs that are launched by HEIs without the status to self-regulate and offer new programs and that HEIs intend to make substantial changes¹ to;
 - 1.2.3 New programs that are launched by HEIs granted the status to self-regulate and offer new programs, but that are beyond the approved scope (i.e. the specified discipline(s)²/academic unit(s), and academic level(s)) and the validity period of this status ;
 - 1.2.4 Existing programs that are launched by HEIs granted the status to self-regulate and offer new programs, but that are beyond the approved scope and the validity period of this status, and that HEIs intend to make substantial changes to.
- 1.3 Changes made according to the administrative regulation on *Higher Education Credit System* to higher education programs that have been in operation before the establishment of the *Credit System* are not considered substantial changes. For transitional provisions, refer to the relevant provisions stipulated in relevant laws and regulations of Macao.

¹ Substantial changes primarily refer to changes that have a major impact on the design, operation, as well as teaching and learning of a program. Changes in the following areas may be considered substantial: program objectives, curriculum plan, learning outcomes, academic qualifications, medium of instruction, study regime or supporting resources, etc. These merely serve as examples for reference and are by no means exhaustive.

² This refers to the grouping of programs based on the definition of “narrow field” in *International Standard Classification of Education (2013)* by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) at <http://www.uis.unesco.org/>.

- 1.4 To undertake PA, HEIs should, based on their own needs, engage EQAAs with relevant evaluation experience and sound track records. For the principles of engaging EQAAs and the terms of evaluation service, refer to the *Guidelines for EQAAs*.
- 1.5 HEIs must seek DSES's approval before engaging EQAAs. Upon completion of a PA exercise, HEIs must submit to DSES the final accreditation report for confirmation of the PA outcome and the "Statement Confirming Fulfillment of Condition(s)" (Statement) (applicable to programs meeting accreditation standards with condition(s)) for follow-up within 45 days upon receipt of the PA report.
- 1.6 Accredited programs have to undertake Program Review within the evaluation cycle and time frame specified in relevant regulations.

2. Guiding Principles of Accreditation

HEIs of Macao must conduct PA based on the following guiding principles:

2.1 Student-centered

Education is by nature student-centered. Under this core philosophy of education, the primary objective of accreditation is to ensure that HEIs can provide favorable and quality learning experience as well as learning environment for students so that they can attain the intended learning outcomes upon completion of the programs under reasonable circumstances.

2.2 Fit-for-purpose

HEIs differ in scale, mode of operation and educational philosophy, etc. As such, accreditation should be conducted on the basis of the stated program objectives to evaluate whether HEIs have adequate institutional systems, resources and operation for their programs to achieve program objectives, and deliver intended learning outcomes.

2.3 Evidence-based

Judgment is made on the basis of evidence to ensure objectivity, fairness and consistency of PA outcomes. Evidence includes the accreditation document prepared by HEIs for PA, and the solid empirical data collected as well as the observations made by engaged EQAAs during the site visit. HEIs should be entitled to express their views and present evidence throughout the PA process.

2.4 Open and Transparent

2.4.1 PA is conducted in an open and transparent manner. Information concerning accreditation areas, standards, criteria, possible sources of evidence and process, etc. is detailed in this set of guidelines.

2.4.2 DSES reserves the right to disclose the whole or part of the evaluation report.

3. Accreditation Areas, Standards, Criteria and Evidence

- 3.1 PA evaluates whether the program being accredited meets the QA requirements of Macao. Higher education in Macao is student-centered and outcome-based. Program accreditation, therefore, focuses on whether the program meets its stated objectives and delivers the intended learning outcomes.
- 3.2 PA reviews the following three accreditation areas and their respective criteria::
- 3.2.1 Program
- Program Objectives and Intended Learning Outcomes
 - Admission Requirements and Selection Process
 - Program Structure and Content
 - Teaching and Learning
 - Assessment
- 3.2.2 Resources and Support
- Academic Leadership, and Teaching and/or Research Team
 - Learning Environment, Resources and Support
- 3.2.3 Quality Assurance of Program
- Program Development, Management, Monitoring and Review
 - Partner Selection, Management, Monitoring and Review (if applicable)
- 3.3 The accreditation areas, standards, criteria and possible sources of evidence are in **Annex 1**. Accreditation documents are to be prepared in a self-evaluative manner and submitted to engaged EQAAs for review. HEIs must elaborate intended program effectiveness for new programs or operational effectiveness for existing programs with intended substantial change(s) by making reference to the accreditation areas as well as their respective criteria, and support the elaboration with relevant documents and data. Refer to **Annex 2** and **Annex 2.1** for “Points to Note on Preparation of Accreditation Documents” and “Outline of Accreditation Document (For Reference Only)” respectively.
- 3.4 If the program being accredited has been granted professional accreditation and/or recognition by relevant authorities, the HEI must submit the relevant professional accreditation and/or recognition report as proof of meeting the professional standards. If there are conditions in the professional accreditation and/or recognition report, the HEI has

to submit evidence as proof of fulfillment of the conditions. If the HEI intends to apply for professional accreditation and/or recognition for the program, the HEI has to state its indicative plan for seeking professional accreditation and/or recognition, the timeline and the professional accreditation body to be engaged.

- 3.5 Higher education programs run by local HEIs must abide by relevant laws and regulations of Macao, and these programs must be offered by HEIs which have been established and recognized according to relevant laws and regulations of Macao. This is one of the PA standards.
- 3.6 Newly established HEIs with sufficient justification can make adjustment to the possible sources of evidence (**Annex 1.2**), subject to their own actual circumstances (e.g. not having any student enrollments yet).

4. Accreditation Model

- 4.1 Peer review is the execution principle of the higher education quality evaluation system of Macao . Under this principle, evaluation must be conducted by peer experts with experience relevant to PA. Peer experts include scholars leading relevant academic development and/or instructors of relevant programs/courses, academic experts who understand the education and cultural contexts of Macao, etc. and professionals from relevant industries.

- 4.2 The composition, the roles and responsibilities, as well as the code of conduct of the accreditation panel (Panel), etc. are outlined in Chapter 4 of Section A and related annexes in the *Guidelines for EQAAs*.

5. Application for Program Accreditation

- 5.1 The HEI intending to apply for PA must submit a PA proposal to DSES. The evaluation proposal should include details of the accreditation exercise, explanation of the engaged EQAA's compliance with relevant requirements (see paragraph 5.2) (attached with supporting documents), as well as reasons for selecting the EQAA, the budget for accreditation expenses, the schedule, the working language in the course of evaluation and a market demand report of the program, etc.
- 5.2 When selecting an appropriate EQAA, the HEI should take account of its relevant evaluation experience, track records and reputation, etc. At the same time, it is also necessary to consider and select the principles and requirements of the EQAA according to the actual needs of the HEI. Further details about the engagement of EQAAs are in Chapter 1 of Section A of the *Guidelines for EQAAs*.
- 5.3 To ensure fairness and consistency, PA has to be conducted on the basis of this set of guidelines. It is only under exceptional circumstances that the HEI may be unable to fully comply with this set of guidelines on the PA areas, standards, criteria and/or process; in such cases, the reason(s) for failing to comply with this set of guidelines (including expansion, reduction, modification), the proposed change(s) as well as their implications must be detailed in the accreditation proposal. Nonetheless, the proposed change(s) should not substantially diverge from this set of guidelines.
- 5.4 The HEI will be informed of the outcome of its PA application by DSES through a notification letter.
- 5.5 Upon receipt of DSES's approval of the PA application, the HEI should enter into a service agreement with its engaged EQAA, and must conduct the PA exercise in hand according to the specifications in the notification letter from DSES and the evaluation proposal approved by DSES. Details of the service agreement are outlined in Chapter 3 of Section A of the *Guidelines for EQAAs*.
- 5.6 The results for the PA application will generally be decided within 90 days.
- 5.7 If DSES deems it necessary, the applicant institution may be required to provide explanations, present evidence and supplementary information.

Or, DSES will obtain technical support services in accordance with the provisions of the higher education quality evaluation system of Macao. Or, DSES will obtain opinions from other professional, academic entities or individuals, including consulting the Panel; in such cases, the calculation of the above period (paragraph 5.6) shall be suspended.

6. Program Accreditation Procedure

- 6.1 Upon signing the service agreement, the EQAA must recruit members for the Panel and execute the service agreement according to the terms set forth in the service agreement and in Chapter 4 of Section A of the *Guidelines for EQAAs*. The EQAA can appoint the Panel only upon clearance of conflict of interest by the HEI and must then send the confirmed panel membership list to DSES for record. The terms of service of the EQAA, and the roles and responsibilities as well as the code of conduct of the Panel are detailed in the *Guidelines for EQAAs*.
- 6.2 On commencement of a PA exercise, the HEI should designate a dedicated contact person to communicate with the case officer of the EQAA. To avoid conflict of interest, the HEI cannot contact the panel members directly.
- 6.3 The HEI is to submit the accreditation document to the EQAA according to the schedule set forth in the service agreement, and the language of the PA document should be the same as the medium of instruction of the program being accredited.
- 6.4 The case officer of the EQAA has a preliminary review of the accreditation document to ensure adequacy of information before sending it to the Panel for study.
- 6.5 The Panel is to review various aspects of the program stated in the accreditation document, such as the effectiveness level of the program, according to this set of guidelines. The Panel may request for clarification and/or supplementary information from the HEI via the EQAA as and when necessary.
- 6.6 The HEI has to provide written responses and/or supplementary information according to the schedule set by the EQAA.
- 6.7 The Panel is to pay a site visit to the HEI on the scheduled dates as set forth in the service agreement to grasp a thorough understanding of the educational plan of a new program or the operation and standards of an existing program. During the site visit, the Panel is to meet different stakeholders (including academic/program leaders of the relevant discipline/academic unit, management staff, staff, students, alumni, alumni, external advisors, partner organisations, employers of alumni and other related external parties, etc.) (the language adopted during

interviews should be the same as the medium of instruction of the program being accredited), visit relevant equipment and facilities, and examine records and other supporting documents. For the “Site Visit Program and Arrangements” and the “Sample of Two-day Site Visit Program (For Reference Only)”, refer to **Annex 3** and **Annex 3.1** respectively.

- 6.8 Under normal circumstances, information collection ends upon completion of the site visit.
- 6.9 Before the site visit comes to an end, the Panel is to conduct the “Exit Meeting” with the academic leaders of the relevant discipline and program leaders to share its key observations about the accreditation exercise, including but not limited to the intended accreditation outcomes and respective decisions, such as meeting/not meeting accreditation standards, and conditions with/without recommendations (refer to paragraphs 7.2 and 7.3). The minutes of the “Exit Meeting” are to be sent to the HEI by the EQAA for record normally within 1 week after the site visit.
- 6.10 The EQAA is to send the draft of the PA report to the HEI normally within 12 weeks after the site visit; the HEI is to comment on the factual accuracy normally within 2 weeks on receipt of the draft report. (Refer to paragraph 7.3.2.)
- 6.11 The EQAA is to send the final PA report to the HEI normally within 2 weeks upon receipt of the HEI’s comments on the factual accuracy of the draft report. If the accreditation outcome is “Meeting Accreditation Standards with Condition(s)”, the EQAA is to issue the Statement to the HEI within 2 weeks after confirming that the HEI has successfully fulfilled the condition(s). (Refer to paragraphs 7.3.3 and 8.1.)
- 6.12 The HEI has to submit to DSES the final evaluation report for confirmation of the PA outcome and the Statement (applicable to programs meeting accreditation standards with condition(s)) for follow-up within 45 days upon receipt of the PA report. (Refer to paragraphs 7.3.3 and 8.1.)
- 6.13 The confirmation procedure of the PA application will generally be decided within 90 days.
- 6.14 If DSES deems it necessary, the applicant institution may be required to provide explanations, present evidence and supplementary information. Or, DSES will obtain technical support services in accordance with the

provisions of the higher education quality evaluation system of Macao. Or, DSES will obtain opinions from other professional, academic entities or individuals, including consulting the Panel; in such cases, the calculation of the above period (paragraph 6.13) shall be suspended.

6.15 The workflow for PA is in **Annex 5**.

7. Program Accreditation Standards, Outcomes and Report

7.1 Program Accreditation Standards

For the details of PA standards, see **Annex 1** and **Annex 1.1**. When necessary, the Panel may make reference to relevant international practices³. If the program being accredited is expected to meet the requirements for industry/professional practice in Macao, these relevant practice requirements must be taken into consideration as well when PA is being undertaken.

7.2 Program Accreditation Outcomes

Possible PA outcomes are “Meeting Accreditation Standards”, “Meeting Accreditation Standards with Condition(s)” and “Not Meeting Accreditation Standards” with respective decisions as follows:

| Accreditation Outcomes | Accreditation Decisions |
|---|---|
| Meeting Accreditation Standards | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Name of Program - Host Academic Unit/Discipline - Specialization or Major and/or Minor (if applicable) - Maximum Intake - Study Regime (full-time, part-time, etc.) - Mode of Delivery (lecturing, online learning, distance learning, etc.) - Number of Credits (if applicable) |
| Meeting Accreditation Standards with Condition(s) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Condition(s), Standards for Fulfillment of Condition(s) and Deadline(s) for Fulfillment (normally no more than 12 months) - Name of Program - Host Academic Unit/Discipline - Specialization or Major and/or Minor (if applicable) - Maximum Intake - Study Regime (full-time, part-time, etc.) - Mode of Delivery (lecturing, online learning, distance learning, etc.) - Number of Credits (if applicable) |
| Not Meeting Accreditation Standards | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Not Applicable |

³ According to international practices, academic and/or professional standards of individual courses and specifications are subject to change, depending on institutional goals and/or program objectives. For example, if an HEI adopts the internationally recognized qualifications of Washington Accord as the graduation requirements of its engineering degree programs, the relevant requirements will become part of the accreditation standards.

7.3 **Program Accreditation Report and “Statement Confirming Fulfilment of Condition(s)”**

7.3.1 The final PA report states the EQAA’s observations, judgments and justifications on different accreditation areas which lead to the concluding accreditation outcome and decisions.

- i. For a program meeting accreditation standards, the PA report should include recommendations for improvement so that the HEI concerned can review and follow up on the accreditation area(s) where gaps are identified, yet the gaps in any accreditation area(s), as a rule, neither make a threat to the program’s operation nor cause an immediate and serious impact on the students concerned.

The report should also include the EQAA’s commendations for the program’s good practices.

- ii. For a program meeting accreditation standards with condition(s), the report should include the condition(s), the standards for fulfillment of the condition(s) and deadline(s) for fulfillment. The HEI concerned must do the follow-up and fulfill these conditions within the time frame set forth in the report. Conditions normally apply to accreditation area(s) with deficiencies that have a relatively far-reaching impact on the program’s operation, yet there will be no immediate and serious impact on the students concerned when these conditions are fulfilled.

When necessary, the EQAA can include recommendations for improvement so that the HEI concerned can review and follow up on the accreditation area(s) where gaps are identified, yet the gaps in any accreditation area(s), as a rule, neither make a threat to the program’s operation nor cause an immediate and serious impact on the students concerned.

The report should also include the EQAA’s commendations for the program’s good practices.

- iii. For a program not meeting accreditation standards, the report should include the Panel’s observations, together with justification, of the substandard gaps in any accreditation area(s) that have a far-reaching impact on the

program's operation as a whole, thus discouraging the HEI concerned from fulfilling the requirements of this set of guidelines within a reasonable time frame;

In the report for a program not meeting accreditation standards, the EQAA must provide the HEI concerned with practicable remedial actions for reference so that the HEI can achieve betterment in the program being accredited to meet the basic standards for PA.

7.3.2 Under normal circumstances, the EQAA is to prepare a draft accreditation report according to the schedule set forth in the service agreement (normally within 12 weeks after the site visit) for an accuracy check by the HEI concerned. The HEI's comments on the factual accuracy of the draft report will normally reach the EQAA within 2 weeks.

7.3.3 The EQAA is to send the final report to the HEI according to the schedule set forth in the service agreement (normally within 2 weeks upon receipt of the HEI's comments on the factual accuracy of the draft report) and issue the Statement to the HEI within 2 weeks upon the HEI's fulfillment of the condition(s).

The HEI must submit to DSES the final accreditation report for confirmation of the PA outcome and the Statement (applicable to programs meeting accreditation standards with condition(s)) for follow-up within 45 days upon receipt of the PA report.

8. Follow-up Action

- 8.1 For a program with “Meeting Accreditation Standards with Condition(s)” as its PA outcome, the HEI concerned has to take follow-up action according to the condition(s) set forth in the accreditation report. Upon fulfillment of the condition(s), the HEI is to receive the Statement issued by the respective EQAA, which must then be sent to DSES for follow-up.
- 8.2 If the PA report contains recommendation(s) for improvement (see items (i) and (ii) of paragraph 7.3.1), the HEI must include the progress of the follow-up action in its annual report submitted to DSES.
- 8.3 If the HEI intends to make substantial changes to an accredited program, it has to report to DSES. DSES will then consider whether the scale, scope, details and implications of these changes, etc. belong to substantial changes leading to the execution of another PA exercise.
- 8.4 If the PA outcome is “Not Meeting Accreditation Standards”, the HEI concerned may submit another PA proposal to DSES, normally 1 year after the issuance of the final accreditation report, with supporting evidence to demonstrate the betterment of the program in response to remedial actions suggested by the respective EQAA in the PA report (see item (iii) of paragraph 7.3.1).

9. Observers

- 9.1 DSES may send observer(s) at its discretion to sit in meetings relevant to the PA exercise (including the “Pre-visit Meeting” held one day prior to the site visit) and the site visit for the purposes of observing the accreditation process and identifying room for improvement in the flow and arrangements of the accreditation exercise, etc. Observer(s) must abide by the code of conduct as well as the terms of confidentiality applicable to the Panel,. If the EQAA/the HEI raises a valid evidence-based objection to the presence of observer(s) on the basis of conflict of interest, the observer(s) concerned must not sit in the relevant meetings and the site visit. However, DSES can assign other observer(s) as replacement(s). Observer(s) are bound by the terms specified in the *Guidelines for Observers* (**Annex 4**) and must carry out their duties.
- 9.2 DSES is to send the name list of observer(s) to the HEI and the EQAA so that the case officer of the EQAA can deliver relevant documents and information, etc. to observer(s) as well.

Program Accreditation Areas, Standards, Criteria and Possible Sources of Evidence

1. All higher education programs offered by local HEIs are bound by relevant laws and regulations of Macao. HEIs are required to provide their respective EQAAs with the brief introduction of their legal entities as well as relevant applicable provisions for reference.
2. PA aims to evaluate whether a new program or an existing program with intended substantial changes meets its stated objectives and the QA requirements of Macao. The evaluation covers various aspects of program development and operation, etc. (i.e. program accreditation areas).
3. The HEI must provide a favorable learning environment through appropriate deployment of resources on the basis of its stated program objectives and the students' educational needs so that students can attain intended learning outcomes under reasonable circumstances. The learning outcomes serve the purposes of facilitating students' personal development and laying a solid foundation for further studies and employment.
4. PA standards are the standards set with reference to Law No. 10/2017 on *Higher Education Regime* of Macao as well as related administrative regulations, relevant industry/professional practice requirements (if applicable), and the standards stated in this annex to determine whether the program being accredited meets the QA requirements of Macao.
5. The PA areas covering the different aspects of program development and operation are interrelated and closely linked. While **Annex 1.1** lists the standards and criteria by the PA areas for easy reference, HEIs should keep in mind the inter-dependent nature of these accreditation areas when using **Annex 1.1** so as to facilitate holistic understanding of this set of guidelines.
6. The list of possible sources of evidence provided in **Annex 1.2** is for reference only and is by no means exhaustive.
7. Newly established HEIs with sufficient justification can make adjustment to the possible sources of evidence (**Annex 1.2**), subject to

their own actual circumstances (e.g. not having any student enrollments yet).

8. When planning for PA, HEIs are advised to conduct self-evaluation to assess whether the programs they offer meet the QA requirements of Macao. Identified gaps should be addressed prior to the application for PA. This is to ensure the smooth running of the accreditation exercise. Overdoing or underperformance may suggest ineffective operation of the programs.
9. To understand how the Panel makes judgments on the basis of the accreditation standards stated in this annex, refer to Chapter 6 and Annex 5 in the *Guidelines for EQAAs*.

Program Accreditation Areas, Standards and Criteria

Accreditation Area I – Program

Standards

Program planning and design has to be in line with the academic development plan of the HEI, taking into account its competence and capacity, so as to reflect the HEI's educational philosophy and educational goals, and meet the manpower demand of society. The program has to be student-centered and follow the outcome-based approach in both design and operation so as to meet the QA requirements of Macao as well as the international standards. If the program is to nurture students for professional qualifications, the program objectives, structure, content, learning experience, learning outcomes, learning environment, resources and support, and operation must meet the requirements of the relevant industry/profession.

Criteria

1. Program Objectives and Intended Learning Outcomes

- 1.1 Program objectives must align with the educational philosophy and educational goals of the HEI, and steer program development and operation.
- 1.2 Intended learning outcomes of the program must specify students' ultimate performance outcomes upon graduation so as to reflect the level of their cognitive and application skills, professional attitude and behavior. The intended program learning outcomes must align with the program objectives and be objectively assessable to demonstrate attainment.
- 1.3 On the basis of its educational philosophy and educational goals, the HEI must set graduate attributes to specify personal qualities, generic skills and behavior of graduates at different academic levels of the same HEI.

2. Admission Requirements and Selection Process

- 2.1 The admission requirements have to be set in accordance with relevant laws and regulations of Macao, and related requirements of the program. Students and staff must be well briefed on the

minimum admission requirements and the selection process. If the program allows special admission routes (e.g. exemption from meeting the minimum admission requirements for outstanding athletes, direct admission to senior year of the program on the basis of credit exemption), the academic unit has to lay down the mechanism of the special admission routes and the execution procedures, and provide learning support for students not meeting the minimum admission requirements and/or having special educational needs upon entry.

- 2.2 The selection process must be fair and align with the admission requirements of the program so as to ensure that the admitted students possess the requisite knowledge, skills and competencies to participate in the learning activities of the program.
- 2.3 The academic unit should set the maximum intake and the breakeven number of students for the program, taking into account available resources in a realistic manner. It should also project the short- to medium- and long- term student intake and have contingency measures in place.
- 2.4 If there are different specializations or majors and/or minors in the program, the academic unit must set the condition(s) for the offer of each specialization or major and/or minor, including the minimum number of students and the selection process. Students and staff must be well briefed on this.

3. Program Structure and Content

- 3.1 The program structure and content must meet the program objectives and provide appropriate learning experience in a coherent, complete, consistent and progressive manner to ensure students' attainment of intended learning outcomes upon graduation.
- 3.2 If the program consists of different types of courses (such as specializations or majors and/or minors, electives and/or generic courses), the weighting of each type of courses must be reasonable and appropriate for the purposes of meeting program objectives and delivering intended learning outcomes.
- 3.3 If the HEI runs a credit system, the program must follow the relevant policy and procedure in credit allocation. The credit system has to comply with the requirements of relevant laws and regulations.

4. Teaching and Learning

- 4.1 Teaching and learning strategies and methods should be formulated in an outcome-based approach. They must align with the learning objectives and assessment so that students can master the program content to attain intended learning outcomes.
- 4.2 Teaching staff should adopt the formulated teaching and learning strategies and methods flexibly to facilitate student learning.
- 4.3 The medium of instruction should be determined according to the program objectives and intended learning outcomes, taking into consideration the characteristics of the relevant discipline and individual courses. The HEI should ensure that teaching staff and students possess requisite language proficiency to take part in teaching and learning effectively.
- 4.4 If the program embraces practicum and/or workplace attachment, the academic unit must plan, manage and monitor the practicum/workplace attachment in accordance with the HEI's relevant policies and procedures. It must also provide students with clear and accurate information, as well as reliable and quality practicum and/or workplace attachment, and support.

5. Assessment

- 5.1 Student assessment must effectively support teaching and learning to facilitate student learning, be conducted in a fair manner and provide reliable evidence to substantiate students' attainment of the intended learning outcomes.
- 5.2 Assessment methods, criteria and tools must be appropriately adopted to achieve the purpose of determining student attainment.
- 5.3 The HEI must set up policies and mechanisms to handle plagiarism and cheating, and provide relevant guidelines for staff and students.
- 5.4 The academic unit must set up a moderation and/or review mechanism to ensure fairness and consistency in student assessment.
- 5.5 The academic unit must state clearly the performance outcomes required of students upon graduation, and the other requirements (e.g. pass mark/grade for individual courses, overall pass mark/grade, attendance rate, participation in social services, etc.)
- 5.6 The academic unit must comply with the prescribed policy and terms when engaging external experts as external examiners

and/or reviewers (if applicable). It must also provide these experts with sufficient information, guidelines and support so that they can effectively perform their roles and responsibilities. The academic unit must review and follow up on the recommendations and comments made by the external experts, and keep records.

Accreditation Area II – Resources and Support

Standards

The HEI must provide adequate and appropriate teaching and learning resources and learning environment to facilitate effective learning. Qualified academic leadership must effectively lead the teaching and/or research team to develop and run the program being accredited to provide quality teaching and/or research services. The program must be periodically reviewed for enhancement to ensure that it meets the QA requirements of Macao. The HEI and/or the academic unit must provide students with adequate and appropriate academic counseling and other support services to ensure their well-being and, under reasonable circumstances, the attainment of intended learning outcomes upon completion of the program.

Criteria

1. Academic Leadership, and Teaching and/or Research Team

- 1.1 The academic leadership must ensure that the program is delivered as planned and reviewed on a regular basis. This is to ensure that the content, objectives and intended learning outcomes of the program are up-to-date. When necessary, the academic leadership should adopt contingency measures to ensure the smooth operation of the program and ultimately provide maximum protection for students.
- 1.2 The academic unit must recruit adequate qualified teaching and/or research staff for teaching and/or research activities, and provide appropriate support to facilitate their effective execution of duties.
- 1.3 The academic unit must periodically evaluate the performance of the teaching and/or research team to ensure teaching

effectiveness and provide appropriate mechanisms for improvement and enhancement purposes.

- 1.4 The HEI should have in place a policy and an effective mechanism on staff professional development to meet their developmental needs at various stages of their career life.

2. Learning Environment, Resources and Support

- 2.1 The HEI must provide sufficient, appropriate teaching and learning resources, as well as learning environment for students to facilitate effective learning.
- 2.2 The academic unit must provide adequate and appropriate academic counseling and other support services to ensure the well-being of students so that students can complete the program and attain the intended learning outcomes under reasonable circumstances.
- 2.3 The academic unit must inform students of clear and accurate information about the support services through reliable channels so that students can enjoy these services under reasonable circumstances.
- 2.4 The academic unit must make good use of student learning records to facilitate student learning and serve for academic counseling.

Accreditation Area III – Quality Assurance of Program

Standards

The HEI must set up an effective QA mechanism to ensure that its programs meet the QA requirements of Macao. The HEI must also review its programs regularly for continuous enhancement and betterment. If the programs involve partner organizations in the operation, the HEI must have proven mechanisms for partner selection and collaboration. The HEI must regularly monitor and review the effectiveness of the partnership. The QA mechanism and decision-making of the HEI should be evidence-based and be informed by regular self-evaluation.

Criteria

1. Program Development, Management, Monitoring and Review

- 1.1 The development, management, monitoring and review of the program must follow relevant laws and regulations of Macao and the QA mechanism of the HEI. Improvements of the

deficiencies must be made according to the internal approval requirements and properly documented.

- 1.2 All decisions regarding the program must be open and transparent, and made accessible to relevant stakeholders (e.g. teaching staff, students, partner organizations, and external experts engaged in program development, monitoring and review, etc.).
- 1.3 The HEI must provide effective mechanisms for students to express their views, file appeals, grievances and complaints, or make any other reasonable requests.
- 1.4 The HEI must regularly collect feedback from relevant stakeholders for program development, monitoring and review, and ultimately for follow-up action.
- 1.5 The academic unit must make reference to the arrangements of similar programs in Macao and overseas during program development and review so as to ensure that the program meets the demand for manpower development in Macao and is comparable to international standards. External benchmarking information and data of this kind must be properly documented, and used as evidence of the internal QA.
- 1.6 The academic unit must specify clearly the roles and responsibilities of the teaching and/or research team and the administrative staff in the QA process, which must be regularly reviewed for corresponding follow-up.
- 1.7 The academic unit must provide guidelines for the implementation of the QA procedures.
- 1.8 The academic unit must regularly review the effectiveness of the QA mechanism, and report to the HEI for the betterment of the mechanism.

2. Partner Selection, Management, Monitoring and Review (if applicable)

If program delivery requires teaching and/or research support from partner organization(s), the academic unit must select the partner organization(s), manage, monitor and periodically review the partnership in accordance with the HEI's prescribed policies and procedures. This is to ensure that the teaching and/or research support services provided by the partner organization(s) are effective in facilitating student learning.

Possible Sources of Evidence

Accreditation Area I – Program

1. Program Objectives and Intended Learning Outcomes, Program Structure and Content, Teaching and Learning

- 1.1 Academic Development Plan at academic unit level or institutional level
- 1.2 Program and Curriculum Plan, relevant reference and data
- 1.3 Program handbook
- 1.4 Syllabus
- 1.5 Samples of lesson plans and teaching materials
- 1.6 Teaching staff to student ratio for different modes of teaching (e.g. lecture, laboratory, workshop, etc.)
- 1.7 Documentary proof of meeting relevant professional accreditation and/or recognition standards (if applicable) (Refer to paragraph 3.4 of Chapter 3)
- 1.8 Samples of requirements and guidelines for practicum and/or workplace attachment (if applicable) as follows:
 - 1.8.1 Practicum and/or workplace policies of the HEI
 - 1.8.2 Proposal of practicum and/or workplace attachment with clear statements on the objectives, intended learning outcomes, duration, assessment scheme, implementation plan, supervising and monitoring unit and/or responsible staff, etc.
 - 1.8.3 Proposed list of partner organizations for practicum and/or workplace attachment
 - 1.8.4 Agreement between the HEI and its partner organization(s), detailing the roles, responsibilities and obligations of both parties, division of work, monitoring and supervision of students, practicum assessment scheme, training for and management of supervisors assigned by partner organization(s), etc.
 - 1.8.5 Selection criteria for students applying for practicum and/or workplace attachment (if any)
 - 1.8.6 Practicum assessment tools and record samples
 - 1.8.7 Guidelines for partner organization(s) /workplace supervisors

2. Admission Requirements and Selection Process

- 2.1 Admission policy and requirements, including the policy and implementation procedures for special admission (e.g. credit exemption), and learning support; statistics and profiles of students of the academic unit over the years, including students admitted under the special admission policy, its percentage to the total student population, and exempted courses and credits
- 2.2 Student selection criteria and process, and relevant admission guidelines; the execution unit (e.g. student selection committee/panel) and its roles and responsibilities
- 2.3 Projection on student intake for the coming five years, including the maximum intake, breakeven number and contingency measures when the set targets are not met
- 2.4 Admission prospectus, program description, program leaflet, guidebook, website or any materials that cover the admission requirements and selection process
- 2.5 Course enrollment form and relevant guidelines
- 2.6 Course outlines, samples of assessment papers, assessment criteria, marking schemes and marked scripts of the supplementary classes provided by the academic unit for students admitted under the special admission routes

3. Assessment

- 3.1 Assessment plan
- 3.2 Assessment schemes of individual courses, including assessment methods, weightings and mapping with intended learning outcomes
- 3.3 Samples of graduation projects/thesis and relevant project/thesis handbooks
- 3.4 Samples of student assessment for final-year capstone courses such as coursework, graduation project, thesis and final examination (for new programs, these samples normally include thesis topics, assessment criteria and marking schemes for the capstone courses; for existing programs with intended substantial change(s), together with marked scripts attempted by students primarily in the past two years)
- 3.5 Samples of student learning records and statistical analysis of students' achievement and progression
- 3.6 Roles and responsibilities, membership list, minutes and records of examination board/committee, and samples of assessment reports considered by the examination board/committee

- 3.7 Policy on the appointment of external experts (e.g. external examiners and/or reviewers), their name list and profiles, roles and responsibilities, samples of assessment reports compiled by them, if applicable

Accreditation Area II – Resources and Support

1. Academic Leadership, and Teaching and/or Research Team

- 1.1 Staffing structure and organizational chart
- 1.2 Policies on staff appointment and evaluation of staff performance
- 1.3 Analysis of qualifications and experience of current teaching and/or research staff
- 1.4 Records of duty allocation of teaching and/or research staff
- 1.5 Performance targets, performance indicators, achievements and follow-up report of teaching and/or research staff
- 1.6 Staff development plan and participation statistics of teaching and/or research staff

2. Learning Environment, Resources and Support

- 2.1 Student handbook
- 2.2 Policies and guidelines on academic counseling and other support services
- 2.3 Relevant data and records of the utilization and effectiveness of academic counseling and other support services
- 2.4 Quantities and utilization rates of different amenities and facilities

Accreditation Area III – Quality Assurance of Program

1. Program Development, Management, Monitoring and Review

- 1.1 Samples of annual internal review reports (for existing programs with intended substantial change(s)) or samples of annual internal review report of other programs from the same academic unit (for new programs)
- 1.2 Reports on various feedback collected both internally and externally, and relevant follow-up reports
- 1.3 Reports on external benchmarking
- 1.4 Reports on internal program approval, and follow-up reports
- 1.5 Information and data used by the academic unit on decision-making
- 1.6 Professional accreditation and/or recognition reports (if applicable)

2. Partner Selection, Management, Monitoring and Review (if applicable)

Policy documents on partner selection, management, monitoring and review, as well as relevant agreements and records

Points to Note on Preparation of Accreditation Documents

1. The accreditation document is the relevant elaboration and written evidence provided by the HEI to substantiate its claim of meeting the accreditation standards. Prepared in a self-evaluative manner, the accreditation document should be a succinct account of the intended program effectiveness for new programs or operational effectiveness for existing programs with intended substantial changes. The accreditation document should be supported by objective facts and data (see **Annex 1.2**) that demonstrate the HEI's meeting the standards of the PA areas as listed in **Annex 1.1**.
2. Some accreditation criteria (e.g. partner organizations, practicum and/or workplace attachment) only apply to relevant programs. HEIs should provide relevant information and evidence in accordance with their own actual operation.
3. Required evidence for new programs and that for existing programs with intended substantial change(s) are more or less the same, except that data and evidence linked with implementation (e.g. samples of marked scripts, graduate numbers, minutes of meetings for examination board/committee, etc.) do not apply to new programs. If the HEI is unable to present certain evidence for a new program, evidence from similar programs run by the same academic unit can serve as evidence of the quality of its program delivery.
4. As programs diverse in nature and mode of operation, it is likely that the volume and the type of documentary evidence provided by each HEI may vary from program to program. HEIs are only expected to provide relevant documentary evidence that has been in use on a daily operational basis.
5. The PA document should be written in the medium of instruction of the program being accredited to reflect the delivery and evaluation, etc. of the program.
6. For the "Outline of Accreditation Document (For Reference Only)", refer to **Annex 2.1**.

Outline of Accreditation Document**Cover Page**

- Name of HEI
- **Program Accreditation**
- Name of Program
- Date for Site Visit
- Name of EQAA
- Issue Date of Document

Content

- Table of Contents
- List of Abbreviation (if any)

Preamble

A brief introduction of the HEI:

- Vision, mission, educational philosophy and educational goals of the HEI
- Brief history and milestones of the HEI
- Academic development strategies
- Institutional governance, academic and administrative management structure at institutional level
- Governance, academic and administrative management structures of the host academic unit and other supporting departments
- Committee and other relevant units responsible for the decision-making of the program being accredited
- Campus and teaching venue of the program being accredited
- Accreditation track records of the HEI, the host academic unit and/or the program

Basic information of the Program

- Host Academic Unit
- Name of Program
- Academic Level
- Discipline
- Credit (if applicable)
- Specialization or Major and/or Minor (if applicable)
- Major Mode of Delivery
- Major Medium of Instruction

- Commencing Year
- Maximum Intake
- Campus Address
- Major Teaching Venue (if outside campus)
- Other Information (if any)

Main Text of Document

- An elaboration of supporting facts and data, presented in the order of the accreditation areas and respective criteria listed in **Annex 1.1** and demonstrating with documentary evidence as shown in **Annex 1.2** that the HEI meets the accreditation standards

Annex

- Annexes are to be listed according to the order of appearance in the main text of the document.

Site Visit Program and Arrangements

1. The site visit is arranged by the EQAA and takes place on the dates set forth in the service agreement.
2. The site visit for PA normally lasts for 2 to 5 days, depending on the complexity of the program (such as the number of specializations or majors and/or minors) and the pedagogic characteristics of the relevant discipline/academic unit (such as involvement of practicum). The site visit program may be adjusted according to the scale of accreditation and the practical situations of individual accreditation exercises to achieve the objectives of the site visit.
3. The site visit activities and the HEI's representatives for interviews must be determined with reference to the terms and conditions related to the scale of accreditation as stipulated in the service agreement.
4. The site visit activities and the HEI's representatives for interviews (the EQAA may make necessary modifications based on practical considerations) are as follows for triangulation:
 - 4.1 Meeting the HEI's representatives⁴:
 - 4.1.1 Academic leadership of the HEI (e.g. Vice President (Academic), Academic Board/Committee);
 - 4.1.2 Leadership of relevant academic unit (e.g. Faculty Dean and Deputy, Department Heads), and/or Discipline Leaders;
 - 4.1.3 Program leadership (e.g. Program Leader(s) and Course Leaders);
 - 4.1.4 Teaching and/or research team, and technical staff;
 - 4.1.5 The teaching team of the program being accredited;
 - 4.1.6 Staff and/or committee members responsible for the QA of the program;
 - 4.1.7 Other staff responsible for the resources of and the support for the program;

⁴ The HEI is required to provide the Panel with the names, the roles and the spoken languages/dialects of its representatives so as to facilitate the interviews during the site visit. For the purpose of triangulation, the HEI's representatives are advised not to take part in interviews at different sessions.

- 4.1.8 Students⁵ and alumni;
 - 4.1.9 External parties:
 - External experts (e.g. external examiners, reviewers, advisors) engaged in the QA of the program or the relevant discipline/academic unit;
 - Partner organization(s) that provide(s) support for teaching and/or research (e.g. practicum and/or workplace attachment);
 - Other stakeholders (e.g. alumni, employers, industry practitioners, professional bodies);
 - 4.2 Visiting campus facilities;
 - 4.3 Reviewing documents (normally those not attached to the accreditation document, usually sensitive in nature or bulky in size), such as meeting minutes, various policy documents including academic and scientific research ones, staff handbook, student handbook, QA handbook, samples and records of student assessment, marked scripts and sample teaching materials, etc.);
 - 4.4 Conducting the “Exit Meeting” (To conclude the site visit, the Panel holds the “Exit Meeting” with leadership of the relevant discipline/academic unit, and program leaders to share its key observations, including but not limited to the intended accreditation outcomes, conditions for meeting the accreditation standards (if applicable) and/or recommendations).
5. Before the site visit, the HEI should inform the EQAA of the name list of the participants in the interviews to be held during the site visit, and their roles. The interview language should be the medium of instruction of the program being accredited. If any of the representatives have a special request for the interview language, please state the spoken languages/dialects of these representatives (for interviews). When necessary, the EQAA should arrange appropriate translation and/or simultaneous interpretation services to facilitate the Panel’s comprehensive understanding of the HEI and to enable the Panel to communicate effectively with the HEI during the site visit.

⁵ Sampling should be done in proportion to the student populations of different study regimes (e.g. full-time and part-time), modes of delivery (e.g. lecturing and distance learning), grades, academic levels (bachelor’s degree, master’s degree and doctoral degree), disciplines enrolled in/host academic units, student sources (e.g. local students, students from Mainland China or other regions), etc., resulting in a representative student combination.

6. Before the site visit, the HEI should provide the Panel with the timetable and the route for the tour around the campus so that the Panel can make prior arrangements for the strategy for the site visit.
7. To facilitate the site visit, the HEI must arrange appropriate and adequate representatives to meet with the Panel during the site visit, and provide the Panel with specified tabled documents for onsite review
8. The HEI should arrange proper meeting facilities and logistical support, including providing meeting rooms for the Panel, computing facilities, photocopying and/or printing services as well as refreshment, etc., in accordance with the site visit program.
9. The Panel may adjust the site visit program on the spot, taking practical considerations into account, to achieve the objectives of the site visit. The HEI is requested to accommodate these changes as and when necessary.
10. The EQAA should get the HEI's agreement before drawing up the site visit program and relevant arrangements in accordance with the terms stipulated in the service agreement.
11. A sample of a two-day site visit program is in **Annex 3.1**.

Sample of Two-day Site Visit Program

(Only applicable to programs with one single specialization or major)

Day One

| Session | Time | Panel Activities | HEI Representatives[#] |
|----------------|--------------------------|--|--|
| 1. | 9:00 am – 10:15 am | Panel arriving at meeting venue to review tabled documents | — |
| 2. | 10:15 am – 11:00 am | Panel’s internal meeting | — |
| 3. | 11:00 am – 11:45 am | Meeting with HEI’s academic leadership (To comprehend how the program being accredited aligns with the HEI’s academic development plan to reflect the HEI’s educational philosophy and educational goals, and to meet the manpower demand of society; and how the HEI allocates resources to facilitate the development and operation of the program) | Vice President (Academic), Academic Board/Committee, etc. |
| 4. | 11:45 am – 12:00 noon | Break | — |
| 5. | 12:00 noon – 1:00 pm | Meeting with leadership of relevant academic unit (To comprehend how the academic unit plans, develops, manages and monitors the program with reference to the “student-centered” guiding principle and the outcome-based approach; and how the academic unit provides support for the teaching and/or research staff) | Faculty Dean and Deputy, Department Heads and Discipline Leaders, etc. |

[#] The HEI concerned is required to provide the Panel with the names and the roles of the representatives. The interview language should be the same as the medium of instruction of the program being accredited. If any of the representatives have a special request for the interview language, please state the spoken languages/dialects of these representatives so as to facilitate the interviews during the site visit. For the purpose of triangulation, the HEI’s representatives are advised not to take part in interviews at different sessions.

| Session | Time | Panel Activities | HEI Representatives[#] |
|----------------|-----------------------|---|--|
| 6. | 1:00 pm – 2:15 pm | Lunch break | — |
| 7. | 2:15 pm – 3:45 pm | Meeting with program leadership (To comprehend the development philosophy and design rationale of the program; various strategies on admission, teaching and learning, and student assessment; the intended graduate competencies and attributes; qualifications and management of teaching staff; and internal program approval and follow-up (including external consultation and resources deployment, etc.)) | Program Leader(s) and Course Leaders |
| 8. | 3:45 pm – 4:00 pm | Break | — |
| 9. | 4:00 pm – 4:45 pm* | Visiting campus facilities and teaching equipment (With a focus on the key facilities and equipment used by the program being accredited) | Guided by representative(s) from academic unit |

The HEI concerned is required to provide the Panel with the names and the roles of the representatives. The interview language should be the same as the medium of instruction of the program being accredited. If any of the representatives have a special request for the interview language, please state the spoken languages/dialects of these representatives so as to facilitate the interviews during the site visit. For the purpose of triangulation, the HEI's representatives are advised not to take part in interviews at different sessions.

* The duration here is adjustable, depending on the scale of accreditation.

| Session | Time | Panel Activities | HEI Representatives [#] |
|---------|----------------------|--|--|
| 10. | 4:45 pm – 5:30 pm | <p>Meeting with students, alumni of relevant discipline/academic unit</p> <p>(To collect the following information from students and alumni: overall comments on the HEI and the relevant discipline; opinions on the program standards and support provided by the HEI; and the HEI's networking with and impact on the academic/industry sector, etc.)</p> | <p>Student representatives[^]/ Alumni representatives of relevant discipline/academic unit</p> <p>(Representatives should be those with direct or close contact with the program being accredited or relevant discipline/host academic unit. Sampling criteria are set by the EQAA on the basis of each individual accreditation exercise; split sessions may be arranged by the EQAA based on the backgrounds of the participants as appropriate.)</p> |

The HEI concerned is required to provide the Panel with the names and the roles of the representatives. The interview language should be the same as the medium of instruction of the program being accredited. If any of the representatives have a special request for the interview language, please state the spoken languages/dialects of these representatives so as to facilitate the interviews during the site visit. For the purpose of triangulation, the HEI's representatives are advised not to take part in interviews at different sessions.

[^] Sampling of student representatives should be done in proportion to the student populations of different study regimes (e.g. full-time and part-time), modes of delivery (e.g. lecturing and distance learning), grades, academic levels (bachelor's degree, master's degree and doctoral degree), disciplines enrolled in/host academic units, student sources (e.g. local students, students from Mainland China or other regions), etc., resulting in a representative student combination.

| Session | Time | Panel Activities | HEI Representatives [#] |
|---------|----------------------|--|---|
| 11. | 5:30 pm – 6:15 pm | <p>Meeting with relevant external stakeholders</p> <p>(To collect external parties' opinions on the program being accredited and comprehend their engagement in program development)</p> | <p>External advisors, external examiners, partner organizations in teaching and/or research area, industry practitioners, employers and representatives from professional bodies, etc.</p> <p>(Split sessions may be arranged by the EQAA based on the backgrounds of the participants as appropriate.)</p> |

The HEI concerned is required to provide the Panel with the names and the roles of the representatives. The interview language should be the same as the medium of instruction of the program being accredited. If any of the representatives have a special request for the interview language, please state the spoken languages/dialects of these representatives so as to facilitate the interviews during the site visit. For the purpose of triangulation, the HEI's representatives are advised not to take part in interviews at different sessions.

End of Day One Schedule

Day Two

| Session | Time | Panel Activities | HEI Representatives [#] |
|---------|--------------------|---|--|
| 12. | 9:00 am – 9:45 am | Panel arriving at meeting venue to review tabled documents | — |
| 13. | 9:45 am – 11:15 am | <p>Meeting with teaching and/or research team, and technical staff (if applicable) of relevant discipline/academic unit and the teaching team of the program being accredited</p> <p>(To comprehend the quality management culture of the relevant discipline/academic unit; teaching staff’s engagement in academic planning, development, management and monitoring (using the program being accredited as the case study); teaching staff’s understanding of and commitment to institutional development, educational goals, learning outcomes, assessment policy, learning support; teaching staff’s induction training; teaching staff’s performance appraisal and promotion mechanism; teaching staff’s engagement in and professional development for research, consultancy and professional services, working environment, workload, and student performance, etc.)</p> | <p>Teaching and/or research team, and technical staff (if applicable) of relevant discipline/academic unit, and representatives from the teaching team of the program (excluding those already interviewed by the Panel on Day One)</p> <p>(If the teaching team is mainly composed of part-time teachers, they should also be invited to attend the meeting. Sampling criteria are set by the EQAA on the basis of each individual accreditation exercise; split sessions may be arranged by the EQAA based on the backgrounds of the participants as appropriate.)</p> |
| 14. | 11:15 am– 11:30 am | Break | — |

[#] The HEI concerned is required to provide the Panel with the names and the roles of the representatives. The interview language should be the same as the medium of instruction of the program being accredited. If any of the representatives have a special request for the interview language, please state the spoken languages/dialects of these representatives so as to facilitate the interviews during the site visit. For the purpose of triangulation, the HEI’s representatives are advised not to take part in interviews at different sessions.

| Session | Time | Panel Activities | HEI Representatives[#] |
|----------------|------------------------|---|--|
| 15. | 11:30 am – 12:30 pm | Meeting with staff and committee members responsible for QA of programs (To comprehend how the QA mechanism effectively supports and monitors the development, management and review, etc. of the program being accredited) | Staff responsible for the approval of the program being accredited, QA Committee or relevant committees and staff, etc. |
| 16. | 12:30 pm – 1:30 pm | Lunch break | — |
| 17. | 1:30 pm – 2:15 pm | Meeting with staff responsible for finance and resources management (To comprehend how the resources, teaching facilities and equipment, staff development and support etc. are allocated to support the development and operation of the program being accredited) | Decision-making bodies responsible for finance and resources management, Teaching and/or Research Staff Development Committee, and other relevant committees and staff |
| 18. | 2:15 pm – 3:00 pm | Meeting with teaching and administrative staff responsible for admission and student support services (To comprehend the admission process, student support services, information dissemination, and implementation effectiveness of various mechanisms (for complaints, appeals and grievances) etc. and how they align with the development and operation of the program being accredited) | Teaching and administrative staff responsible for admission and student support services |

[#] The HEI concerned is required to provide the Panel with the names and the roles of the representatives. The interview language should be the same as the medium of instruction of the program being accredited. If any of the representatives have a special request for the interview language, please state the spoken languages/dialects of these representatives so as to facilitate the interviews during the site visit. For the purpose of triangulation, the HEI's representatives are advised not to take part in interviews at different sessions.

| Session | Time | Panel Activities | HEI Representatives[#] |
|----------------|----------------------|---|--|
| 19. | 3:00 pm – 3:15 pm | Break | — |
| 20. | 3:15 pm – 4:00 pm | Call back session (Panel may invite specific HEI representatives to come again to explore a certain issue, if needed.) | Upon confirmation from the Panel (if applicable) |
| 21. | 4:00 pm – 5:45 pm | Panel’s internal meeting | — |
| 22. | 5:45 pm – 6:15 pm | “Exit Meeting” (To share the key observations made by the Panel with the leadership of the relevant academic unit) | Leaders of relevant academic unit |

The HEI concerned is required to provide the Panel with the names and the roles of the representatives. The interview language should be the same as the medium of instruction of the program being accredited. If any of the representatives have a special request for the interview language, please state the spoken languages/dialects of these representatives so as to facilitate the interviews during the site visit. For the purpose of triangulation, the HEI’s representatives are advised not to take part in interviews at different sessions.

End of Day Two Schedule

Note: The above sample of a two-day site visit program is for reference only. The HEI and the Panel can negotiate and make necessary modifications based on the actual circumstances of each individual exercise.

Guidelines for Observers

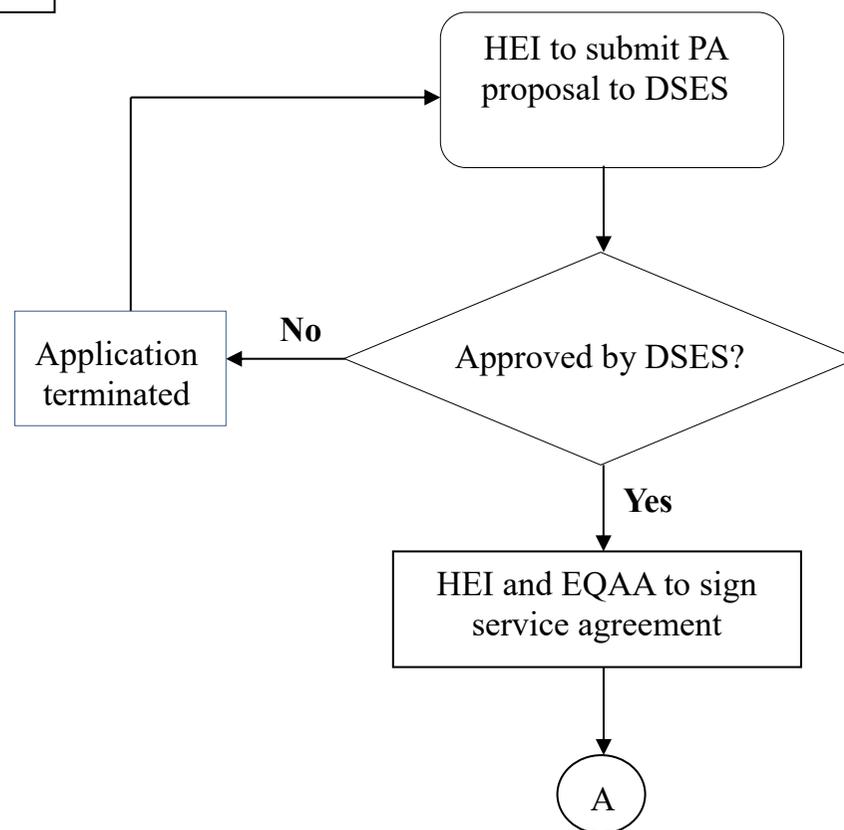
DSES may send observers at its discretion to sit in meetings relevant to the accreditation exercise (including the “Pre-visit Meeting” held one day prior to the site visit) and the site visit for the purposes of observing the accreditation process and identifying room for improvement in the flow and arrangements of the evaluation exercise, etc. Observers are subject to the code of conduct set forth in this set of guidelines, and must carry out their duties.

1. Code of Conduct for Observers

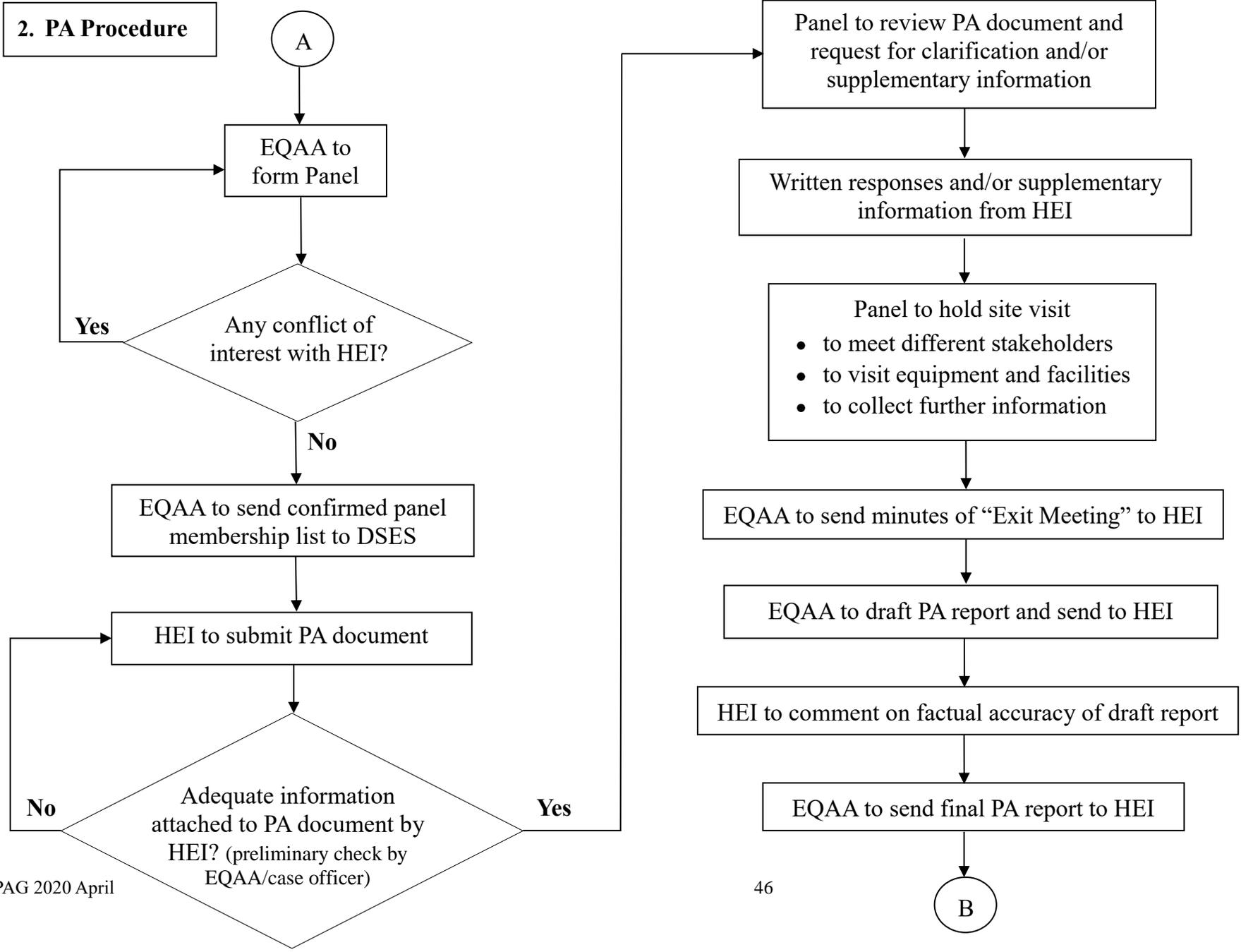
- 1.1 DSES provides the HEI being accredited and the EQAA with the name list of observers. If the EQAA/the HEI raises a valid evidence-based objection to the presence of the observers on the basis of conflict of interest, the observers concerned shall not sit in the relevant meetings and the site visit.
- 1.2 Observers must abide by the same code of conduct and terms of confidentiality as the panel members.

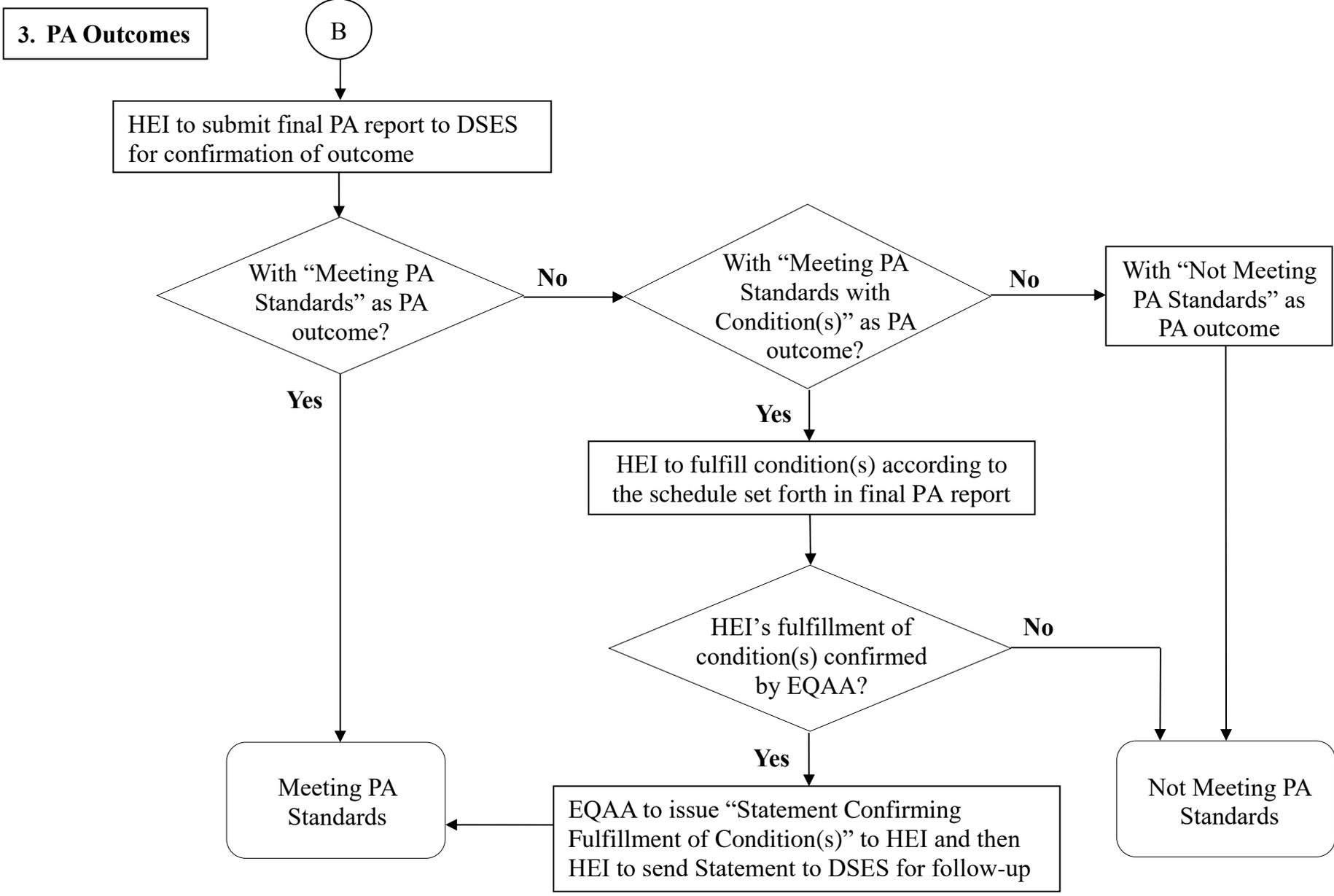
2. Procedures for Observation

- 2.1 Before the site visit, the case officer of the EQAA sends observers the requisite documents to be reviewed by the Panel (e.g. the accreditation document, the Panel’s collective comments to the HEI and the HEI’s written responses, the site visit program, agenda and documents of the “Pre-visit Meeting”, etc.).
- 2.2 Observers are not to participate in the discussion during the meetings with the Panel and the HEI’s representatives..
- 2.3 Observers shall not record, video-tape or take photos at any time during meetings relevant to the accreditation exercise (such as the “Pre-visit Meeting”) and during the site visit.

Workflow for Program Accreditation (PA)**1. Application for PA**

2. PA Procedure





Glossary

(in alphabetical order)

| | |
|--|---|
| Academic Unit | It refers to an academic-related unit within an HEI, such as Faculty. |
| Academic Counseling and Other Support Services | Academic counseling and other support services include services on course enrollment, academic advice, personal counseling, career counseling, life skills training, emotional and financial support, and special educational needs, etc. HEIs may also offer other forms of support in accordance with their visions and missions, including but not limited to physical training, aesthetic development, overseas exchange and site visits. |
| Accreditation Document (Application to PA) | It is the document provided by HEIs for review by EQAAs when conducting PA; it is to be prepared in a self-evaluative manner. The PA document must elaborate the intended program effectiveness (for new programs) or operational effectiveness (for existing programs with intended substantial changes) with reference to the different accreditation areas, and the elaboration must be supported with relevant documentary evidence and data. |
| Accreditation Outcome | The possible outcomes are “Meeting Accreditation Standards”, “Meeting Accreditation Standards with Condition(s)”, and “Not Meeting Accreditation Standards”; the accreditation outcome is detailed in the accreditation report. |
| Accreditation Panel (Application to PA) | This is the Panel formed by the EQAA under the principle of peer review. This Panel must execute external evaluations in accordance with this set of Guidelines and the <i>Guidelines for EQAAs</i> by making judgments and recommendations on the standards of the program being accredited. |

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>Accreditation Report (Application to PA)</p> | <p>It is the final report of the program being accredited sent by the EQAA to the HEI after the site visit for PA. The accreditation report covers the EQAA’s observations, judgments and respective justifications made on the standards of the program according to the different accreditation areas, leading to the concluding accreditation outcome and respective decisions.</p> |
| <p>Case Office</p> | <p>A case officer, in his/her capacity as the representative of the EQAA, is responsible for handling an evaluation exercise and acts as the contact point between the HEI being evaluated and the Panel.</p> |
| <p>Discipline</p> | <p>A discipline refers to the grouping of programs based on the definition of “narrow field” in <i>International Standard Classification of Education (2013)</i> by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).</p> |
| <p>Evidence-based</p> | <p>This is one of the guiding principles of PA, under which judgment is made on the basis of evidence (including the PA document provided by HEIs, the solid empirical data collected by engaged EQAAs as well as the observations made by the Panel during the site visit) to ensure objectivity, fairness and consistency.</p> |
| <p>External Quality Assurance Agency (EQAA)</p> | <p>EQAAs are quality assurance organizations that provide evaluation services for HEIs. Such organizations must meet the requirements specified in Chapter 1 of Section A in the <i>Guidelines for EQAAs</i> and be approved by DSES before providing specified evaluation services for relevant HEIs.</p> |
| <p>Fit-for-purpose</p> | <p>This is one of the guiding principles of PA, under which engaged EQAAs must evaluate whether relevant institutional systems, resources and operation of HEIs are adequate enough for the program being accredited to achieve the stated program standards and the intended learning outcomes based on the prescribed program objectives.</p> |

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>Meeting Accreditation Standards with Condition(s)</p> | <p>It is the accreditation outcome for HEIs accredited with condition(s). Such HEIs must take follow-up action according to the condition(s) set forth in the accreditation report. Upon fulfillment of all condition(s), HEIs will be granted the “Statement Confirming Fulfillment of Condition(s)” by their engaged EQAAs.</p> |
| <p>Open and Transparent</p> | <p>This is one of the guiding principles for PA, under which accreditation is conducted in an open and transparent manner. Both HEIs and engaged EQAAs must abide by the same set of accreditation guidelines which details the accreditation areas, standards, criteria, possible sources of evidence and process, etc. when conducting PA. PA outcomes are to be included in final PA reports.</p> |
| <p>Outcome-based Program</p> | <p>It refers to a program with quality determined by learning outcomes, with a focus on the cultivation of graduates with intended competencies and attributes.</p> |
| <p>Peer Review (Applicable to PA)</p> | <p>Peer review is the execution principle of the higher education quality evaluation system of Macao. Under this principle, evaluation must be conducted by peer experts with experience relevant to PA. Peer experts include scholars leading relevant academic development and/or instructors of relevant programs/courses, academic experts who understand the education and cultural contexts of Macao, etc. and professionals from relevant industries.</p> |
| <p>Pre-visit Meeting</p> | <p>It is the preparatory meeting held by the Panel normally one day prior to the site visit. In the “Pre-visit Meeting”, the case officer, as instructed by the Panel, provides the following information: background information of the program being accredited, analysis data and related documents, etc., and the major questions to be discussed during the site visit.</p> |

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| <p>Program</p> | <p>The program here refers to the teaching content, teaching activities and student assessment, etc. arranged according to the program objectives as well as the Program and Curriculum Plan.</p> |
| <p>Program Accreditation (PA)</p> | <p>PA is a type of evaluation under the higher education quality evaluation system of Macao to determine whether the programs offered by local HEIs meet their stated program objectives and facilitate students to achieve the intended learning outcomes for the purpose of evaluating whether the higher education programs in Macao meet the QA requirements of Macao.</p> |
| <p>Program Accreditation Areas</p> | <p>PA areas are the various aspects of program development and operation categorized into three major areas for specification of the standards and criteria for PA.</p> |
| <p>Program Accreditation Standards</p> | <p>PA standards are the standards set with reference to Law No. 10/2017 on <i>Higher Education Regime</i> of Macao as well as related administrative regulations, relevant industry/professional practice requirements (if applicable), and the standards stated in the annex of this set of guidelines to determine whether the program being accredited meets the QA requirements of Macao.</p> |
| <p>Quality Assurance Requirements of Macao</p> | <p>The QA requirements of Macao refer to the compliance with Law No. 10/2017 on <i>Higher Education Regime</i> and related administrative regulations of Macao, particularly the provisions of the higher education quality evaluation system of Macao, as well as the requirements specified in the evaluation guidelines of Macao.</p> |

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| Site Visit | It is the Panel’s visit to the campus of the HEI concerned on specified date(s) set forth in the service agreement to meet different stakeholders of the HEI, visit relevant equipment and facilities, and examine records and other supporting documents in order to fully comprehend the educational plan (for new programs) or the operation and standards (for existing programs with substantial changes) of the program being accredited. |
| Staff | This term refers to teachers and other staff of HEIs. |
| Student-centered | This is one of the guiding principles of PA, under which HEIs provide favorable and quality learning experience as well as learning environment for students so that they can attain the intended learning outcomes upon completion of the program under reasonable circumstances. |
| Substantial Changes | Substantial changes primarily refer to changes that have a major impact on the design, operation, as well as teaching and learning of a program. Changes in the following areas may be considered substantial: program objectives, curriculum plan, learning outcomes, academic qualifications, medium of instruction, study regime or supporting resources, etc. These merely serve as examples for reference and are by no means exhaustive. |
| Teaching Facilities | Teaching facilities refer to all facilities and equipment needed by students for learning, including classrooms, laboratories, training rooms, online learning platforms, libraries, study rooms and/or relevant workplace attachment sites, etc. |