

PERFORMANCE EVALUATION STANDARDS FOR THE
HEIs

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Section A

Developing the Performance Evaluation Standards for the HEIs

A.1 Background

The Higher Education Commission was established in 2002 by the Government of Pakistan to facilitate the development of indigenous universities to become centers of excellence for education, research and development. Through facilitating this process, the HEC intends to play its role in spearheading the building of a knowledge-based economy in Pakistan.

Founded by Presidential Ordinance No LIII¹ in September 2002, the Commission was entrusted with a broad mandate to evaluate, improve and further develop the higher education and research in Pakistan. The reform agenda is supported through the grant of adequate powers along with record increases in financial resources by the Government.

Since its establishment, the Higher Education Commission has undertaken a systematic process of implementation of the five-year (2002 -2007) agenda for reforms outlined in the HEC Medium Term Development Framework (MTDF), in which Access, Quality and Relevance are identified as the key components. To address these challenges a comprehensive strategy was outlined that identifies the core strategic aims for reform as (i) Faculty Development, (ii) Improving Access, (iii) Excellence in Learning and Research, and (iv) Relevance to National Priorities. These strategic aims are supported by well-integrated of cross-cutting themes for developing Leadership, Governance and Management, enhancing

¹ http://www.hec.gov.pk/new/QualityAssurance/QA_Agency/download/HECOrdinance.pdf

Quality Assessment and Accreditation, and Physical and Technological Infrastructure Development.

Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in the country will put efforts to get recognition for maintaining and improving the academic quality from the Higher Education Commission by demonstrating that standards set by the HEC are being met and academic activities are also in accordance with the policies of the Commission. The Higher Education Commission (HEC) will develop and improve policies in order to further enhance the standards according to international practices and development.

The Higher Education Commission anticipates that Higher Education Institutions will work towards achieving excellence through continuous improvements in their quality and effectiveness. The Higher Education Commission has taken a significant initiative to improve the performance of HEIs and started up with primary step of outlining the *Performance Evaluation Standards for the HEIs* to be used for the purpose. A total of eleven standards are defined in this document and each one of these articulates a specific dimension of the institutional quality. Thus, all the eleven standards are equally important to be met by the HEIs to achieve the desired certification to quality provision in higher education, international visibility and significant place in the regional and international rankings of the higher education institutions.

A.2 What is an HEC recognized Higher Education Institution (HEI)?

An HEI distinguished as a quality provider meets the following standards²:

²Standards for Accreditation Commission on Institutions of Higher Education, New England Association of Schools and Colleges, 2005.

- has defined a clear mission statement appropriate to higher education;
- is driven by defined goals translating mission and appropriate to an institution of higher education;
- has established processes³ and procedures to accomplish its mission and goals;
- has acquired and organized all necessary financial and human resources to realize its mission and subsequent goals;
- has the ability and will for continuity of achievements towards its goals and objectives with stability;
- has implemented the eligibility conditions, criteria and standards laid down by the Higher Education Commission, Pakistan to assure the quality of education imparted by the HEIs;
- has demonstrated a quality assurance system like QEC (Quality Enhancement Cell) or a similar system to continuously evaluate and improve the quality standards required for international compatibility.

A.3 Introduction

Institutional performance is both a status and a process. It should provide a public certification of acceptable minimum quality as well as the opportunity and incentive for self-improvement in the quality providing Higher Education Institutions.

It is to be understood that an institution may be stronger than others while serious weaknesses in a particular area may negatively affect the institution's performance evaluation status. Also, meeting institutional performance evaluation standards will not assure the quality of its academic programs, courses or graduates. These standards are primarily qualitative criteria that assess the institution's current state of affairs in terms of quality and its effectiveness. A significant variation in policies, practices and resources of an

³Characteristics of Excellence in Higher Education, Middle States Commission on Higher Education, 2002.

institution from pre-set *Performance Evaluation Standards for the HEIs* developed by the Higher Education Commission, needs clear justification on their appropriateness, consistency with institution's mission and objectives, and effectiveness in meeting the aim of the HEC's standards.

Self Assessment is an essential element in achieving the HEC recognition. The guidelines for Self-Assessment have already been published as "*The Manual for Self-Assessment*"⁴ for the purpose of implementation at department/programme level in the universities. Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) of the HEC is looking after the follow up and capacity building process required for the Self-Assessment System to be in place effectively at programme level in all Universities and HEIs. The whole process of Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) is led by the QECs established under the umbrella of QAA of HEC at the universities and subsequently become an integral part of universities concerned. The QECs also work in coordination with accreditation councils to streamline the process of programme level accreditation. However, the institutional performance evaluation has many more dimensions with greater complexity. This document defines the institutional performance evaluation standards ensuring quality provision certified by the HEC for the HEIs. The institutional performance evaluation comes under purview of the HEC whereas this process is informed by the results of IQA practice done by the HEIs through adoption of the "Self Assessment Model". The results of Self Assessment will correspond to the process of *Performance Evaluation Standards for the HEIs* to be conducted by the HEC in line with best practices of External Quality Assurance (EQA).

The Higher Education Commission aims to work for continuous improvement of these standards and their effectiveness for the purpose. The HEC through QAA will review individual institutions periodically based on the performance

⁴ Self Assessment Manual, Dr. Abdul Raouf, UMT, Lahore

evaluation standards defined here. These periodic reviews will be conducted through a combination of On-Site Evaluation by Performance Evaluation Teams under the guidance of QAA. The quality standards observed by an HEI will be recognized/ confirmed only as a result of successful performance evaluation reviews through evaluation of institutional achievements against pre defined standards.

The visiting teams will undertake the institutional performance evaluation process against all eleven standards defined here and these are considered to be closely inter-related with each other.

The authors acknowledge that design of this booklet has benefitted from the Standards for Accreditation, Commission on Institutions of Higher Education, New England Association of Schools and Colleges, 2005.

A.4 Performance Evaluation Standards for the HEIs at a Glance

Various performance evaluation standards outlining major areas to be focused on by the HEIs for evaluation of their effectiveness and future development are given below:

| | |
|-------------|------------------------------------|
| Standard 1: | Mission Statement and Goals |
| Standard 2: | Planning and Evaluation |
| Standard 3: | Organization and Governance |
| Standard 4: | Integrity |
| Standard 5: | Faculty |
| Standard 6: | Students |
| Standard 7: | Institutional Resources |
| Standard 8: | Academic Programmes and Curricula |
| Standard 9: | Public Disclosure and Transparency |

Standard 10: Assessment & Quality Assurance

Standard 11: Student Support Services

A.5 Significance of Totality for Institutions & Evaluators

The totality created by fundamental elements and other relevant information regarding institution under evaluation is significant for institutions and evaluators in order to make correct and informed decisions. Fundamental elements, context statements and evidences of fulfillment of standards should not be used separately as check lists for decision making. For instance, an institution may not possess evidence for a specific fundamental element but demonstrate the fulfillment of that standard through alternative information and analysis. Therefore, totality of the analytical concept is significantly important to follow the best practices of decision making for institutional performance evaluation. Another thing is also important to understand that these eleven standards are minimum requirement for a quality providing institution however; HEIs may raise these standards up to desired level to achieve excellence in academia.

Section B

Performance Evaluation Standards for the HEIs

Standard 1

Mission and Goals

1.1 Statement of the Standard One

The institution's mission and subsequent goals define its purpose within the context of higher education and indicate that to whom the institution serves and what it intends to accomplish. The goals stated by the institution are fit in broader aims of higher education and are consistent with its character, and implemented in conformity with the standards set by the HEC. The mission drives institutional activities conveys the importance of quality standards to be met for its effectiveness and continuous improvement.

1.2 Context

The mission is developed through involvement of the institution's community, and approved by its governing body. It defines the institution, its scope, characteristics and individuality as an academic institution. The basic purpose of establishment of the institution should be reflected in the mission statement.

Moreover, the mission of an effective institution to be is well translated and articulated through a set of goals to be achieved throughout the whole academic body with substantial participation of management, faculty, students and the community. The mission and goals are developed through a consultative process conducted amongst all stakeholders and the governing body of the institution.

1.3 Fundamental Elements of Mission and Goals

An effective mission and consistent goals have the following essential factors:

- guide management, faculty, staff and governing bodies in decision making across the board in its resource allocation and academic programme development etc.
- support scholarly and academic activities at all levels appropriate to basic purposes of the institution.
- developed through consultation with all concerned who are responsible for implementation or facilitation of the accomplishment of these goals.
- passed through an ongoing process of periodic reviews and formal approval.
- publicized and shared broadly with all concerned
- relevant to internal, external and community contexts

1.4 Evidence⁵ for Fulfillment of the Standard One

- mission/ vision statement/ documents
- analysis reports of the process adopted for development of mission and subsequent goals and periodic reviews of mission and goals
- analysis reports of the process of application of these goals and coordination for implementation
- review reports of processes adopted to disseminate the mission and goals to faculty, students and members of the governing body and efforts to maintain the institution's commitment to the mission amongst members of the institution.

1.5 Institutional Effectiveness

The institution demonstrates clarity and relevance of mission and conducts periodic reviews for evaluation of the content⁶ and relevance of its mission and goals and to assess their effectiveness in guiding planning and resource

⁵Characteristics of excellence in higher education Eligibility requirements and standards for accreditation, Middle States Commission on Higher Education, 2006

⁶Standards for Accreditation, Commission on Institutions of Higher Education, New England Association of Schools and Colleges, 2005

allocation. The evaluation results are periodically reviewed so that the institution demonstrates that it has responded to reviews to improve and further enhance institutional quality and its relevance to national needs.

Standard 2

Planning and Evaluation

Statement of the Standard Two

The institution practices a process of planning and evaluation appropriate to its needs and helpful to accomplish its mission and objectives. The institution defines its planning and evaluation priorities and practices them effectively.

2.1 Institutional Planning

Institutional planning is a disciplined, coordinated, systematic, and sustained effort to achieve the institution's mission and goals through decisions and actions that shape and guide what the institution is, what it does, and why it does it, with a focus on the future.⁷

2.2 Evaluation

The institution regularly evaluates its actions and achievements in conformity with its mission and goals. The evaluation results provide a fair and systematic set of information to help in institutional improvement with emphasis on academic programmes. Evaluation enables an institution to verify with reliable means its achievement in accomplishing its goals and objectives inside and outside the classroom both in a quantitative and qualitative manner.

The results of the evaluation inform about the institutional planning effectiveness in relation to resource allocation programmes and learning outcomes as well as future development.

⁷ Characteristics of excellence in higher education Eligibility requirements and standards for accreditation, Middle States Commission on Higher Education, 2006

2.3 Context

The Institutions face the challenge of maintaining a balance among its goals, directions from the Government, and expectations of all those to whom it is accountable, and the availability of resources. The growth and development of an effective institution depends upon a rational and consistent inbuilt process of self-assessment and planning. The nature and quality of planning conducted by an institution is considered to be the best indicator of its effectiveness which is further linked up with its capability to achieve its own goals and flexibility to simultaneously respond to the dynamics of the prevailing environment. Thus, with efficient planning, along with clarity of mission and strategic thinking, an institution continues to meet its purpose and goals, while creating equal opportunity for further development.

Planning is a coordinated process to achieve institutional, operational and department level goals while maximizing resource allocation and utilization as well as benefiting from self evaluation. It helps the institution decide on appropriate mechanisms to assess resource demands, prioritization for allocation of available resources, means to generate desired resources, financial control, utilization of allocated resources and elimination of conflicts about resource allocation.

2.4 Fundamental Elements of Planning and Evaluation⁸

An HEC recognized institution is expected to conduct a process of planning which is:

- based on the institution's mission, goals, activities, future engagements and evaluation results
- clearly communicated to all concerned participants and incorporates the results of self-assessments

⁸ Characteristics of excellence in higher education Eligibility requirements and standards for accreditation, Middle States Commission on Higher Education, 2006

- based on well defined decision making process and authority
- based on assignment of responsibility for quality improvements and accountability
- responsible to maintain the records of success in implementing the planned goals and for the subsequent results of implementation
- assessed periodically focusing on the effectiveness of planning, resource allocation, institutional growth and development

2.5 Evidence for Fulfillment of the Standard Two

- systematic planning process and its continuity
- analysis reports of institutional culture for effective planning which assures campus wide participation of faculty, staff, students and administration

2.6 Institutional Effectiveness

The institution systematically and periodically evaluates its effectiveness in terms of its planning and evaluation activities on a continuous basis in order to achieve the desired goals. The 'results of evaluation' are used for further enhancement of the process of implementation of its mission and objectives.

Standard 3

Organization and Governance

Statement of the Standard Three

The institution has a governance system that facilitates the fulfillment of its mission and goals and strengthens institutional effectiveness and integrity. The institution creates and maintains an environment which enables teaching-learning service and scholarship that helps in developing a research culture. It assures provision of support adequate for the appropriate functioning of all programmes across the organizational system.

3.1 Organization

The institutional structure facilitates the optimum use of available resources, development of an enabling learning & research environment, excellence in scholarship and quality improvement.

3.2 Governance

The governance system of an institution clearly defines the roles of different tiers of institution in policy development and decision making. The governance structure includes an effective governing body with desired autonomy to assure and further strengthen the institutional integrity and helps in the process of fulfillment of its responsibilities for policy consistency and resource development aligned with the mission of the institution.

3.3 Context

Governance provides the means and system through which responsibilities and authority are assigned, delegated and shared in an enabling environment to assure harmony and mutual support. Governance aims at strengthening

institutional ability to realize its mission and goals in the most effective manner for its greater benefit and particularly those of its students. Different tiers of collegial governance such as faculty, administration, staff, students and the governing body support each other to achieve the institutional mission and objectives in an appropriate manner. An efficient governance system demonstrates participatory approach that allows open discussion of the issues concerning mission, planning and resource allocation by those who assume responsibilities for respective activities.

The governing bodies of an institution should have sufficient expertise and independence to safeguard the integrity and quality of the institution and to lead the institution towards accomplishment of its mission. The governing body assumes the role of defender of the institution and advocates for its quality with accountability where and when required. Willingness of a governing body to assess its effectiveness periodically is also an important indicator of good governance in academics.

3.5 Fundamental Elements of Organization and Governance

An HEC recognized HEI is assumed to have:

- regular reviews of institutional funding and grant activities including public and self finance arrangements.
- a governance system led by a governing body capable of guiding the institution to accomplish its mission and safeguarding the public interest. The governing body should include adequate expert members.
- a process to resolve or prevent the conflict of interests within the institution.

- Opportunities for student participation or input in decisions that affect them.⁹

3.6 Evidence for Fulfillment of the Standard Three

- Documents on governance such as constitution, byelaws, enabling legislation, charter etc.
- Establishment of a governing body and the selection process for members etc.
- Periodic assessment reports on effectiveness of the organization and its governance etc.
- Conflict of interest policy.
- Record of meetings of internal bodies to deal with relevant matters.
- Documentation of students' participation in the governance system.
- Reports of responsibilities of governing body members or governing components and records of their meetings and other official activities.

3.7 Institutional Effectiveness

The effectiveness of the institution's organizational structure and governance system is improved through reviews and assessments on periodic basis. These evaluation results are conveyed to administrators and faculty members and integrated in planning for the purpose of quality improvement and increased effectiveness of governance practices at the institution.

⁹Characteristics of excellence in higher education Eligibility requirements and standards for accreditation, Middle States Commission on Higher Education, 2006

Standard 4

Integrity

Statement of the Standard Four

In the management of its affairs, conduct of its programmes and its dealing with students, faculty, governing bodies & external agencies involving the general public, the institution adheres to high ethical standards providing support to academic freedom. The institution intends to practice and exemplify the values and ethical standards articulated in its mission.

4.1 Context

Integrity is the defining attribute of an effective higher education institution and can be manifested through the conduct of institution within each of the other standards. Integrity of an institution is demonstrated through the manner in which it sets its goals, selects and retains its faculty, admits students, safeguards the interests of its students, develops curricula & programmes, shows sensitivity to equity and diversity issues, pursues the research and service goals, and serves the society. Institution should keep its promises, commitments, and represent itself truthfully.

Higher Education Institutions should illustrate those qualities within their working environment which they intend to impart to their students. These qualities may include justice, equity, truthfulness, and the respect for human dignity and diversity.

The same adherence to ethical standards and conduct should be offered to all members of an institution including distance learning programmes, subsidiaries, or other arrangements. Academic and intellectual freedom provides opportunities of information sharing on respective issues being a scholar. The self assessment reports of an institution developed through the process defined in the *University Quality Standards and Assessment* provide the basis for institutional performance evaluation conveying results to facilitate evaluation decisions therefore, relationship between institutional performance evaluating agency (HEC) and respective institution should be of mutual respect, trust and confidence. The institutions should realize their responsibility to provide fair, adequate and timely information desired for the purpose while accreditation process developed by the HEC should not dictate the mission and goals of the institutions.

4.2 Fundamental Elements of Integrity

An HEC recognized HEI reflects the following integrity attributes:

- A recognized institution shows high standard of integrity on the basis of fair, transparent and impartial practices for hiring, retention and dismissal of employees.
- an efficient and widely published system to address the grievances of students.
- prevention of conflict of interests and if happens, an efficient system to address the conflict of interest.
- strong ethical practices and respect for individuals.
- equitable and appropriate treatment with all parties and individuals while considering planning and policy making for practicing by the institution.
- inbuilt practices of safeguarding intellectual property rights.
- enabling environment for students, faculty, administration and other university staff promoting mutual respect for each other's ideas, background and prospective etc.

- practicing integrity and openness in public relations, announcements and all other forms of information sharing with public.
- periodic assessment of policies, implementation processes and practices reflecting integrity and availability of these factual reports.

4.3 Evidence for Fulfillment of the Standard Four

- reports of policies regarding public announcements, press releases explaining institutional position on various issues concerning society at large and students and parents in specific.
- review and analysis reports of consistency of practices of recording student grades/scores on their transcripts and re-take of examinations system.
- review reports of tenure and promotion statistics.
- Faculty handbook and its comprehensiveness to guide on issues of promotion, compensation, tenure and grievance addressing procedures etc.

4.4 Institutional Effectiveness

Integrity of an institution is strengthened through consistency of periodic assessments of policies & processes conveying high ethical standards observed by the institution. The integrity is not only assured but also protected with constant improvements in systems and practices by the institutional community members.

Standard 5

Faculty

5 Statement of the Standard Five

The institution hires, retains, sustains and develops a faculty that is suitable to the accomplishment of its mission. Faculty qualifications, numbers, and quality oriented performance is sufficient to achieve the institution's mission and objectives. Faculty offers academic programmes with competence and assumes related responsibilities.

5.1 Context

Faculty is primarily responsible for teaching, research, scholarship and overall students learning contributing substantially in developing academic, professional, research and service programmes of an institution corresponding to its mission and goals. Centre of all activities of the faculty at each institution is teaching and learning and they are committed to quality provision in all student aspects.

The old traditional role of the university faculty is being replaced with responsibilities of qualified professionals who are qualified by virtue of education, training, experience and other appropriate skills. The professional qualifications should have consistency with expected academic outcomes, standards of quality and mission of the institution. Adequate number of faculty and professionals selected through certain selection criteria is important for smooth delivery of programmes and services. The selection criteria for appointment of faculty at different levels, promotion criteria and periodic faculty evaluation practices should be defined clearly. Enlightened institutions encourage faculty research and professional development for consistency of quality standards.

5.2 Fundamental Elements of Faculty

An HEC recognized HEI is expected to demonstrate the following attributes as fundamental elements of faculty:

- faculty members and other professionals of the institution are appropriately qualified, trained and prepared to assume the assigned roles and they are adequate in numbers
- curricula is designed, maintained and updated by trained and qualified faculty and professionals working at the institution
- faculty, other professionals and even teaching assistant staff demonstrate excellence and continuous professional growth in respective fields contributing to accomplishment of the mission of the institution
- adherence to respective criteria and procedures of faculty appointment, promotion, supervision, evaluation, tenure, dismissal etc.
- well articulated and implemented criteria for evaluation of all those professionals and faculty members who are responsible for academic programmes
- well developed mechanism of institutional support for a consistent faculty development and advancement in the context of teaching, research, scholarship and service.

5.3 Evidences for Fulfillment of the Standard Five

- Documented institutional practices for faculty appointment, tenure standards & procedures, supervision, promotion, evaluation for both regular/full time, part time, adjunct and other faculty
- dissemination of evaluation criteria and procedures
- review reports of teaching effectiveness, analysis of faculty peer review reports for teaching, scholarship and service

- records of faculty productivity in scholarship of teaching and research in the creation of knowledge, consistent with the mission of the institution
- analysis reports of correlation between faculty profile & performance and student learning outcomes
- assessment reports of faculty development initiatives, level of faculty satisfaction and training
- analysis reports of graduate outcomes and integration of results into faculty improvement policies

5.4 Institutional Effectiveness

The institution periodically evaluates the adequacy of the faculty and support provided to the faculty for its effectiveness in teaching, scholarship, research and service consistent with institutional mission. These evaluation results are used to improve the quality of faculty and its contribution to accomplish the mission of the institution.

Standards Six

Students

6 Statement of the Standard Six

The Intuition pursuits to admit students whose academic interests, educational goals, potentials and abilities are compatible with its mission and seek to retain them through best provisions and exploration for accomplishment of their goals. The institution holds integrity while interacting with its students.

6.1 Context

The best measure of institutional success is the success of its students during and after their enrollment in the intuition, as students are the prime beneficiaries of the HEIs. The institution ensures quality of admission practices for all kind of students including transfer, graduate, non-degree, part time, self-finance etc and provides additional support services to facilitate them in accomplishment of their educational goals.

The criteria of admission, retention, recruitment, and academic success vary according to student needs, mission, objectives & structure of the institution. However, admission criteria and practices are significant for retention and success of students. Periodic review of admission criteria and policies based on the information provided by analysis of student persistence and attrition data.

6.2 Fundamental Elements of Student Admissions

An HEC recognized institution maintains the following standards for admission and retention of students:

- Admission criteria and policies available to inform the prospective students and parents to make right decisions
- Harmony of admission policies and practices with the institutional mission and supportive to accomplishment of mission successfully
- Complete and accurate information regarding academic programmes and other educational offerings
- Comprehensive information on institution-wide assessment results and statements of expected learning outcomes to inform the prospective students
- Information and appropriate advice regarding financial aid, scholarships, grants, loans and refunds etc.
- Policies and procedures for credit recognition and transfer of credits etc.
- Student success assessment on ongoing basis to evaluate the match between admitted student attributes and goals of the institution and programmes and reflection of these assessment results in further improvement of admission and retention policies.

6.3 Evidences of Fulfillment of Standard Six

- Review reports of enrollment plan for marketing, advertising, admission and retention
- Periodic Review reports of admission catalogs, views books, web-statistics, and other relevant material
- Evidence of support programmes and services for low achieving students to improve their efficiency in chasing their educational goals and expected learning outcomes
- Periodic review reports of information provided on financial aid programmes, scholarships and grants etc
- Evidence of utilization of review reports of financial aid component to further improve these and to assure the public information sharing

- Evidence of utilization of review report results to further improve the policies of admission, retention, persistence etc.
- Evidence of utilization of attrition data and drop out analysis reports to investigate the reasons and to improve the situation for these students

6.4 Institutional Effectiveness

The institution evaluates its effectiveness systematically and consistently in admitting and retaining students and appropriateness of its student services in achieving the institutional objectives. These evaluation results are further utilized to revise the institutional goals and services and to realize the mission with enhanced level of student satisfaction.

Standard Seven

Institutional Resources

Statement of the Standard Seven

The human, physical, technological, financial and information resources of an institution are appropriate, sufficient and accessible to realize its mission. The institution demonstrates effective and efficient utilization and continued development of these resources.

7.1 Context

Institutional management of resource acquirement, appropriate allocation and utilization is pivotal for planning, goals achievement, mission fulfillment and integrity. The effective use of internal and external resources plays significant role in institutional performance.

Institutional resources such as financial, physical, technological, equipment & supplies, research, staffing, and all kind of other resources should be an essential element of planning, allocation and assessment at all tiers. The institutional priorities are reflected through respective allocation of resources among various programmes, units, and individuals. The planning process conveys guidelines for decision making regarding allocation of resources, rather each plan itself provides the methodology of rational reviewing and monitoring of all respective institutional support resources.

The institution should be capable to acquire, maintain and develop the appropriate physical and technological resources such as building (rented or owned), fully equipped classrooms & laboratories, grounds, materials, student, and faculty housing etc.

While the information resources such as library and instructional technology should be capable to develop an atmosphere conducive to teaching, learning and research, capacity building/ training of faculty, students and staff is imperative to train them for effective use of library and instructional technology.

As far as the significance of financial resources is concerned, the efficiency of utilization of institutional resources is linked up with equally strong financial plan required to acquire, allocate and develop these resources. A detailed analysis of financial data and financial plan provided by the institution should reflect that it has sufficient financial resources to acquire other resources and to realize its mission and goals within an acceptable time period.

Components of a usual financial plan include forecast of revenues, expenses, investment income and a statement of financial position at the end of a fiscal year. Preferably, the data available with the institution should be of at least two recent fiscal years and financial plan for two additional years should also be available for review.

7.2 Fundamental Elements of Institutional Resources

An HEC recognized HEI demonstrates the following fundamental elements of institutional resources:

- Well developed and practiced strategies to evaluate and assess the level of availability and efficiency of utilization of institutional resources
- Policy and consistency of policies and procedures guiding the allocation of resources
- Appropriate resource allocation approach to address the needs of faculty, staff and students relevant with accomplishment of the institutional mission
- Comprehensive Master Plan and Life-Cycle Management plan encompassing the infrastructure and facilities

- Streamlined process of educational and other equipment supply, maintenance, replacement, and development according to new technological advancements which is essential to support all academic programmes and research
- Efficient institutional control over acquisition, allocation, and development of resources linked with planning and consistency of policy
- Annual independent audit system with follow up mechanism to respond to any audit concerns
- Process of periodic assessment of efficient utilization of resources

7.3 Evidence for Fulfillment of the Standards Seven

- Review reports of institutional resources, fund raising and grant activities
- Review of Periodic reports of institutional planning, assessment and budget
- Review reports of work of various institutional committees dealing with resource acquiring, allocation or replacement etc.
- Review reports of resource availability and allocation and linkage with planning cycle
- Review reports of transparency of the system of all kind of contracts and agreements regarding resource acquiring and sharing
- Review reports of endowment policies and procedures if any
- Review reports of resource management

7.4 Institutional Effectiveness

The institution conducts periodic assessment of its physical, technological, information and financial resources in line with its mission, needs identified for present, and planned for future, based on rational planning and budget allocation. The adequacy, efficient utilization and impact of institutional resources is evaluated systematically. The results of these assessments are used for further improvement.

Standard Eight

Curricula and Academic Programmes

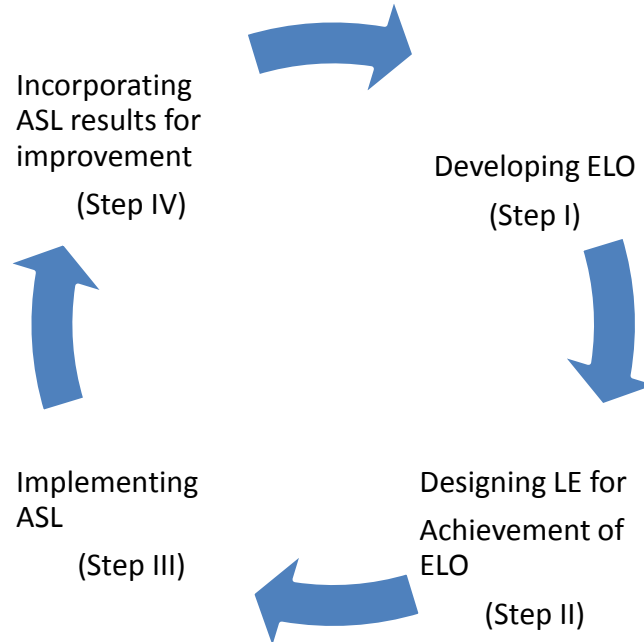
Statement of the Standard Eight

The academic programmes offered by institution are consistent with its mission and goals. These programmes culminate in identified competencies of students and lead to degrees, diplomas or certificates in widely recognized fields of study. The institution works effectively to plan, provide, evaluate, assure, and improve the academic quality and integrity of its academic programmes, curricula, credits and degrees awarded.

8.1 Context

Key elements in evaluating the success of an institution's academic programmes are identified as consistency with institution's mission, suitability to depth and breadth of student learning and levels of study and provable ability of students to integrate knowledge. Primary goal of an educational institution is teaching & learning whether at undergrad or graduate level. While individual goals of undergraduate study may vary. Generally, under graduate study has an immediate goal of advance study such as Master, Doctor, or a formal recognized credit through structured learning above graduate level, whereas graduate studies should offer focused study and relevant specialized research in compliance with the institutional goals and implications for teaching environment.

The dynamics of creation of academic programmes, curricula, and experiences may be characterized as a **Four-Step Cycle** given below¹⁰:



(Fig 8.1 Dynamics of Creation of Academic Programmes & Curricula)

Step I: Developing statement of Expected Learning (programme) Outcomes (ELO) in an articulated manner

Step II: Designing Learning Experiences (LE) to provide opportunities to students to achieve Learning Outcomes developed during Step I

Step III: Implementing effective measures of student achievements of pre defined Learning Outcomes through systematic Assessment of Student Learning

Step IV: Using the Student Assessment Results for continued teaching and learning improvement

¹⁰ Characteristics of Excellence in Higher Education, Middle States Commission on Higher Education, 2006

Academic Programmes and Curricula of a recognized institution should have the following characteristics¹¹:

- Adequate Content, firmness and depth to be characterized as different levels of study with clear distinction between different levels of study i.e. Pre-College, College, and University and between nature of study i.e. undergraduate and graduate study
- Association amongst design of specific curricula, programmes, learning activities, articulated programme goals, and overall mission of the institution
- Responsiveness to modern notion of research findings methods of inquiry.

"Information Literacy" is a collective term used for various skills related to students' capability in acquiring information and its processing for understanding on the subject, whether this information is collected through library facilities, field experiments, consultative discussions, and all other means. It is a critical factor of any academic programme at undergraduate and graduate level and applies to all disciplines included in an institution's curricula.

Few of these skills comprising Information Literacy are enlisted below for guidance:

- skill to determine the nature and extent of required information
- skill to access information efficiently
- skill to critically evaluate the sources and content of collected information
- skill to integrate the sorted information in the student's knowledge base and assessment
- skill to achieve a specific objective by using selected information in an effective manner

¹¹ Characteristics of Excellence in Higher Education, Middle States Commission on Higher Education, 2006

- skill to understand the economic, legal, and social issues related to information and use of respective information technology; and
- skill to observe laws, regulations, and institutional policies pertaining to access and use of required information

Information Literacy is closely tied up with Technological Competency indicating provision of technological resources up to optimum level and required capability at all levels within an institution and its curricula. Therefore, an accredited institution should provide relevant technological facilities, tools, and training to teachers and learners to access acquire and integrate knowledge for their studies, teaching and research with continuous improvement to match technological advancement taking place internationally.

Further to Information Literacy and Technological Competency, effectiveness of academic programme depends on availability and access to adequate learning resources including library and support services provided with trained, educated and enabling staff to facilitate the teaching and learning process. Similarly, if an institution is also engaged in *Distance Education*, required support services offering need based flexibility and sensitivity to facilitate the Distance Learners are important.

8.2 Fundamental Elements of Academic Programmes and Curricula

Evaluation of academic programmes and their continuous improvement is an ongoing responsibility of a recognized HEI and it is supposed to demonstrate that:

- Academic programmes and curricula are harmonized with its mission in terms of areas of study, adequacy of content, breadth of knowledge, and scope to conduct at all levels

- Formal offering of Undergraduate, Graduate, Post Graduate and or professional programmes leading to earn a degree or any other education credential/certificate developed to advance the learning experience of students and to encourage the blend of extended learning base
- Availability of adequately learned faculty with credentials suited to graduate curricula
- Promoting research and independent thinking at graduate level required for advanced studies
- Programme goals are outlined in terms of student learning outcomes
- The academic programmes and curricula designed is supported by the required facilities, instructional equipment, library, faculty, and staff
- Consistency of academic programmes, their goals and related activities with the institutional mission
- Curricula and course syllabi incorporate expected learning outcomes
- Programme outcomes and student learning is assessed in relation with goals and objectives of the academic programmes and these results are used for improvement of programme effectiveness and student learning

8.3 Evidence for Fulfillment of the Standard Eight

- Evidence of well defined and coherent programme goals and objectives reflecting institutional mission
- Impact Analysis document of educational programmes on resources of education
- Provision of desired balance between theory and practice to achieve programme and institutional goals
- Defined student learning outcomes

8.4 Institutional Effectiveness:

The institution offers recognized academic programmes and curricula consistent with its mission and effective in achieving the learning goals of students

including required skills and degrees, diplomas and certificates. The academic quality standards are equally compatible at national and international level for the purpose of Students' and Credits' mobility and recognition. These academic quality standards are evaluated systematically and results are used for continuous quality improvement and enhancement.

Standard Nine

Public Disclosure and Transparency

Statement of the Standard Nine

The institution provides complete, accurate, accessible and adequate information to its students, prospective students, other stakeholders and intended audiences to help them in making informed decisions regarding education.

9.1 Context

The institution informs public about its mission, objectives, and expected learning outcomes; requirements and procedures and policies related to admission and the transfer of credit; student fees, charges and refund policies; rules and regulations for student conduct; information relating to attending or withdrawing from the institution; academic programmes, courses currently offered, and other available educational offerings; academic policies and procedures, and requirements for degrees or other forms of academic recognition¹².

The information publishes a Current University Catalogue through its website, print media, and communication which is sufficient to meet the requirement of its students, prospective students, their parents and interested public members in order to make informed decisions about their education.

The set of information provided by the institution for public disclosure includes list of its current faculty, indicating departmental faculty status and distinguishing between those who have full- and part-time status, showing degrees held and

¹² Criteria for Admission to *Candidacy for Accreditation and Standards for Accreditation* in Madagascar, November 2007.

the institutions granting them. The details of names and positions of administrative staff and members of the academic, governing, and legislative bodies are also included.

The institution also publishes the details about locations, academic programmes offered at Branch Campuses, recognition status and it is responsive to reasonable size of inquiries about institution.

9.2 Fundamental Elements of Public Disclosure and Transparency

An HEC recognized HEI is expected to hold and reflect a policy of Public Disclosure on the basis of characteristics given below:

- The website of institution is developed, maintained and updated to meet the requirement of interested public
- Appropriate institutional support for implementation of Policy to inform intended audiences through electronic, print media, and communication
- Adherence to ethics of public disclosure policy to support students for informed decision making regarding their education
- Activities designed and executed to realize the communication strategy for information of interested public
- Responsiveness to inquiries about institution and its programmes

9.3 Evidence for Fulfillment of the Standard Nine

- Evidence of Public Disclosure/ Communication Policy
- Functional, accessible, and update website of the institution
- Published reports on quarterly or annual basis to inform the stakeholders
- Published information about the total cost of an academic programme, availability of financial aid and the duration of that programme/course
- Statement about current recognition/accredited status
- Documented evidence of description of the size and characteristics of the student body

- Published evidence of campus setting, hostel facility, and other available support services for the students and faculty etc.
- Published information of available curricular, co curricular, sports and other services available for student grooming

9.4 Institutional Effectiveness

A systematic process of periodic review is designed and implemented to assure that print and electronic publications of institution are adequate, complete, current, and transparent in nature and broad in scope. The results of these periodic review reports are used for improvement in Public Disclosure Policy.

Standard Ten

Assessment & Quality Assurance

Statement of the Standard Ten

The institution has developed and implemented a Self-Assessment & Internal Quality Assurance process that helps in evaluating its effectiveness in realizing its mission and achieving its goals, and its compliance with external assessment and quality assurance standards both at national and international level.

10.1 Context

This standard of Institutional Assessment and Quality Assurance rests on all other Institutional Performance Evaluation Standards and based on collective results. Therefore, it is important to outline its context for the purpose of understating on practicality.

HEC has developed a QA Framework to follow the roadmap of Quality in the national context and to remain in line with international best practices. Therefore, combined efforts were made to take in to account both Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) and External Quality Assurance (EQA). According to QA Framework, the IQA practices such as Self Assessment at programme and institutional level is developed and implemented through recently established Quality Enhancement Cells (QECs) at various Universities for the purpose of informing EQA practices to be developed and implemented through Accreditation Councils at programme level and through HEC at the institutional level. IQA is determined as a pre condition for EQA in the national context because none of the formal QA system was present in majority of the HEIs in the beginning. The Self Assessment Manual developed for programme level and the University

Quality Standards and Assessment Model for the institutional level developed to facilitate universities on IQA practices needs to be formally adopted.

10.2 Assessment

Is a systematic process of gathering, reviewing and using important quantitative and qualitative data and information from multiple and diverse sources about academic programmes, for the purpose of improving student learning, and evaluating whether academic and learning standards are being met.¹³ The results of Assessment need to be used for consistency of improvement in student learning, teaching, research and governance etc. Assessment may be considered as the third most important tier of a four step planning cycles given below:

Step I: Developing clearly described written statements, expressed in observable terms, of institutional level goals based on the participation of institutional community as outlined under Mission & Goals.

Step II: Designing the institutional strategies to translate the mission and objectives to achieve the institutional goals as outlines in Planning and Resource Allocation

Step III: Assessing institutional performance and achievements in terms of key institutional goals; and

Step IV: Using the assessment results for further improvements of prenames and services with integration link to institution's ongoing planning cycle.

The effectiveness of an institution is directly reliant upon magnitude and quality of contribution made by each programme and service provided to achieve the institutional goals as a whole. Thus the standard of Assessment & Quality Assurance builds upon on all other Performance Evaluation Etandards for the

¹³ Self-Assessment Manual, Dr. Abdul Raouf, UMT, Lahore, 2006

HEIs defined in this document. This standard ties together the assessment results of all other fundamental elements into wholesome manner to conclude that how well an institution is working collectively to realize its mission, to achieve its goals and to support student learning which is considered as one of the key goals of academic institutions.

While the HEC expects the institutions to develop an assessment and quality assurance system, it gives the leverage of diversity across institutions in terms of approach and methodology. The institutional procedures used for assessment and quality assurance may vary on the basis of mission, goals, resources and organization; however, it needs to be in place in any formal shape in compliance with national or international practices. Whatever the process is developed, the effective assessment & quality assurance system is required to be useful, candid, cost & time effective, planned, organized, and sustainable.

For guidance and capacity building of the institutions in terms of Programme Assessment, HEC has already published a Self Assessment Manual¹⁴ which clearly defines standards of Self Assessment for academic programmes and the other document with title of University Quality Standards and Assessment Model is included as Annex with the *Performance Evaluation Standards for the HEIs*. The said model will be used by the HEIs in the context of self assessment and as a part of IQA whereas its results will inform the Institutional Performance Evaluation process as a part of EQA practices.

10.3 Quality Assurance

Quality is the means through which an institution can guarantee with confidence and certainty that the standards of its educational provision are being maintained and enhanced¹⁵. The HEC expects from the Universities and HEIs to be

¹⁴ Self Assessment Manual, Dr. Abdul Raouf, HEC, 2006

¹⁵ QA Manual for Higher Education in Pakistan, Z. Batool & R. H. Qureshi, , 2008

committed to enhance the quality of their programmes within the context of their mission, goals, resources, capacities, and creating an enabling environment in which teaching, learning, research and other services of universities occur.

Self Assessment and Quality Assurance stands central to the whole performance evaluation process which believes that each institution is committed to continuous improvement in quality and is capable of demonstrating that its mission is being fulfilled. Quality is a professional responsibility which is owned by the institution which subsequently recognizes the professional responsibility of each individual for quality assurance and improvement.

The performance evaluating body such as HEC in case of performance evaluation of Pakistani HEIs provides recognition status to confirm that an institution meets the minimum performance standards defined by HEC. However, the institution should be aware of the changing needs of the society and global demands in the context of higher education development. The standards set for measuring quality of an institution should not be static but must develop and foster the advancement of society its progress towards well being and international competitiveness.

10.4 Fundamental Elements of Assessment & Quality Assurance

An HEC recognized institution is assumed to demonstrate the following assessment Quality Assurance characteristics:

- Efficacy of a formal, organized and consistent system of Quality Assurance and Self-Assessment containing a process of evaluating and improving the programmes and services and realization of institutional mission.
- Compliance of QA and Assessment System meeting the following criteria:
 - ❖ Integration of programme goals and goals of services with each other through a foundation provided in the institutional mission and subsequent goals.

- ❖ Systematic and consistent use of a combination of qualitative and quantitative measures through the best use of available data and information, its relation with the goals, and usefulness of results to inform the decisions and future planning.
 - ❖ Collaboration between faculty and university administration for the purpose of facilitating each other in goals achievement at both levels.
 - ❖ Practicality and plainness to understand and to be owned by the respective tiers.
 - ❖ **Standard and consistent periodic evaluation mechanism of the university assessment and QA system and processes.**
- Evidences of the use of university quality assessment results for further improvement in planning by sharing of these results with the respective constitutional and legislative bodies and responsible individuals.
 - Documented strategic plans of the institution to reflect the consideration of QA and Assessment results.
 - **Precaution:** This standard needs to be taken in totality by the institution and evaluators too, based on the fundamental elements, evidences of fulfillment of standard and other information sources as an institution lacking in provision of evidence of one fundamental element may demonstrate through an alternative information sources that the standard under assessment is met.

10.5 Evidence for Fulfillment of the Standard Ten

- Documented policies and governance structures like QECs or any other those are supportive to institutional assessment and quality.
- Financial, technical and administrative support for the process of institutional assessment and quality assurance.

- Provision of capacity building and professional development opportunities and resources required for application of institutional assessment and using the assessment results.
- Implementation and adherence to academic and institutional quality standards and policies developed by HEC to match with both national and international standards.
- Documentation of fulfillment of institutional mission and achievement of key goals.
- Quality and Assessment surveys/proformas record of students, faculty and other stakeholders.
- Documentation of using the self assessment results to make more informed and accurate decisions regarding improvement of planning, resource allocation, revising strategies, budgeting and improving processes for students, faculty, staff and society.

10.6 Institutional Effectiveness

An effective self assessment and Internal Quality Assurance System (IQA) is developed and applied through a QEC or any other similar structure for the purpose of realization of institutional mission and improved compatibility at national and international level. The IQA and Self-assessment adoption process efficiently corresponds to External Quality Assurance system and it is capable of integrating the assessment results for institutional quality enhancement.

Standard Eleven

Student Support Services

Statement of the Standard Eleven

The institution demonstrates adequate and efficient student support services that enable students to achieve their educational goals directly and facilitates the overall process of achieving institutional mission.

11.1 Context

Enabling learning environment needs institutional sensitivity to wider range of students' life issues including their mental & physical health and safety because *Quality of Campus Life* significantly affects the student learning. The institution requires a well organized and integrated system of student support services that play significant role in achieving their educational goals. A staff leadership and broad institutional commitment is a complementary factor to success of these services. These services become an integral part of the whole educational activity and help in strengthening the learning outcomes. The adequate and appropriate services that may include inter alia; sports and extracurricular activities, general cleanliness and pleasant outlook of the campus& classrooms, cafeteria and health centre facilities, efficient system of re-dressal of grievances etc, create an enabling learning environment with greater efficiency of education delivery system.

The student support services model should be flexible and responsive in nature to address full spectrum of diverse needs of students, their abilities and cultural diversity. The service should include also support to admissions, registration, orientation, financial aid/scholarships, advising, counseling, housing/hostels, child care, placement, tutoring, cultural programmes, and security while consistency

with institutional mission demands flexibility of these services according to scope of educational services delivery model of the respective institution.

Student support services should be efficient to address the needs of diverse student community including older students, international students, students with disabilities, distance students, and students under multi-campus arrangement. Further, the roles and responsibilities of students as partners in the educational process should be clearly conveyed to them by the institution.

11.2 Fundamental Elements of Student Support Services

An HEC recognized HEI demonstrates the following attributes of Student Support Services:

- An efficient student support services programme responsive to student needs and strengths, consistent with institutional mission, supportive to student learning objectives and easily accessible.
- Adequate student advisory services and processes.
- Efficient professional cadre to provide students' support and advisory services.
- Effective system of redressing the students' grievances and complaints.
- Updated and complete record of student complaints, grievances and institutional responses.
- Inbuilt mechanism of student support services' assessment and using the assessment results for further improvement.
- Regulated and institutionally administered athletic programmes to channelize the energies of students towards positive competition.

11.3 Evidence for Fulfillment of the Standard Eleven

- Comprehensive analysis reports of student support services accessible to students and other stakeholders.
- Existence of student support services to the best possible standard.

- Mechanism of resolutions of student grievances and updated records.
- Review reports of student involvement and satisfaction with the provided academic support services, co-curricular and extracurricular activities.
- Periodic assessment reports of student support and advising services with practicable recommendations for further improvement.
- Print or electronic review reports of availability of required students' support and advisory services reflected through student handbooks, catalogues, newspapers etc.

11.4 Institutional Effectiveness

The institution demonstrates the development and implementation of an efficient and adequate range of student support services that help students in achieving their educational goals and facilitate the overall process of realization of institutional mission. The periodic assessment results of student support services are used for continuous improvement of the delivery and quality of these services.