Joint Quality Review Committee

Guidelines on Institutional Review and Submission of Information

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW

The Institutional Review is the second stage of the JQRC review framework for the Self-financed Sub-degree Programme Units (SSPUs). This follows the Preview stage and is a more in-depth investigation and review of the quality assurance processes used to ensure the quality of self-financed sub-degree programmes.

The Institutional Review is more evidence-based and involves the provision of evidence of quality assurance processes as applied to programmes. The Institutional Review is also a more interactive process compared to the Preview, involving site visits and an interactive dialogue with the personnel of the Institutions / SSPUs.

1. Purpose of Institutional Review

The purpose of Institutional Reviews is to provide for a peer review of the institutional structures and processes adopted for ensuring the quality of Self-financed Sub-degree programmes, including structures and processes for ensuring the appropriate institutional support and environment, with a view to identifying areas for improvement and also instances of good practice.

2. Objectives

- To provide a detailed review of the quality assurance processes governing the self-financed sub-degree (SFSD) programmes based on evidence of the implementation of the processes
- To provide a review of the institutional support and environment affecting the quality and quality assurance of SFSD programmes
- To follow up on areas and issues identified in the Preview
- To identify areas where improvement is recommended
- To identify good practice
3. Issues Considered in an Institutional Review

(a) Institutional Plans and Policies
- Institutional polices and academic plans (at the Institutional and/or SSPU level) on the development of SFSD programmes, and processes/ responsibilities for formulating such plans
- Institutional policies for the quality assurance of SFSD programmes, at Institutional and SSPU level

(b) Programme Approval Authority
- Authority for the approval of SFSD programmes : relationship between approval authority and central academic authority

(c) Programme Approval, Delivery, and Monitoring
- Processes for the design and approval of programmes
- Standards and Processes for admission, assessment, and determination of awards
- Processes for the benchmarking and continuous monitoring of standards
- The involvement of different stakeholders in the various processes
- Processes and responsibilities for the classification of programmes for the Qualifications Framework

(d) Institutional Support for Quality
- The staffing support for SFSD programmes : Institutional requirements on staff qualifications and SSR
- Policies and procedures for staff appointment, appraisal and development
- Policies and procedures for allocation of resources to programmes
- Policies and responsibilities for student support services
- Policies on publicity and information access

(e) Indicators of Quality / Quality Assurance
- Indicators of input such as profile of student intake on major / higher level programmes, staff profile for major / higher level programmes
- Output indicators such as graduation figures for major / higher level programmes, professional recognition of programmes (as applicable)
- Instances of good practice / innovative practice in quality assurance
4. **Format of Institutional Review**

The IR will be conducted on an Institutional basis. The IR will cover all the SSPUs at an Institution, however, the focus of the review will be on the larger SSPUs within the Institution.

The IR involves the following stages:
- Submission of Self-evaluation report and documentation by the Institution/SSPUs
- Site Visit by Institutional Review panel
- Finalization of findings and recommendations in a Report

The IR shall be conducted through a peer review process, starting with the submission of documentation and a Self-evaluation Report from the SSPU, which should address the issues of the IR and follow the JQRC guidelines for the submission.

JQRC will form an Institutional Review Panel which will peruse the submission from the SSPU, and seek additional information as necessary (including documentation pertaining to any particular programme of study if required). A site visit to the SSPU will then be conducted by the IR Panel. Findings and recommendations will be contained in an IR report which will be submitted to the JQRC Academic Council and Board of Directors.

5. **Timeframe for IR**

The normal timeframe for conducting one IR is as follows:

- **Issue of JQRC guidelines to Institution**
  - Week 0
- **Agreement on dates of submission and site visit**
  - Week 1
- **Submission of Self-evaluation report/documentation**
  - Week 10
- **Panel seeks clarification/additional information**
  - Week 11-13
- **Response of Institution/SSPU to questions**
  - Week 13-14
- **Site Visit to Institution/SSPU**
  - Week 15
- **Preparation of IR Report**
  - Week 16-22
6. **Preparation for IR**

The IR starts with a discussion/ negotiation process between JQRC and the SSPUs, regarding the format and timeframe of the review. A schedule is agreed upon focusing on the dates of the IR site visit, and the date of submission of the review documentation.

SSPUs should make particular reference to the following:
- **Issues Considered in an Institutional Review**
- **Guidelines on the Submission of Documentation**
- **The Preview Criteria**

“The Issues” include areas which have been covered in the Preview Criteria (Items (b) and (c)). SSPUs should re-consider these items in the light of the Preview, and provide updates regarding their quality assurance systems including changes to structures and processes.

Other than the required information, the SSPU should try to demonstrate their quality assurance process by providing documentation which track the different stages of a sample programme, from design to approval and delivery.

One of the objectives of the IR is the sharing of good practices. SSPUs are therefore invited to demonstrate good practices through providing selective examples of good practice in relation to the quality and quality assurance of their programmes.

*Appendix 1 and **Appendix 2

7. **The Institutional Review Panel**

There will be a separate Panel for each review. An IR Panel will comprise about 4/5 to 7 members, depending on the size and complexity of the exercise.

The IR Panel will comprise members from the Board of Directors and/or Academic Council of JQRC and also external members from other institutions and/or from the professions/ industry. There will also be one member form the Institution under review, from units outside the SSPUs to be nominated by the Institution Proper. This institutional member will act as a “resource person” in the Panel to provide a better understanding of the institutional context but will
not take part in the making of recommendations or drafting of the IR Report.

The Institution/SSPUs under review will have an opportunity to comment on the proposed Panel membership, and raise objections in principle based on any perceived conflicts of interests. The Academic Council or the Board of Directors of JQRC will consider any objections raised and make the final decision.

8. The Visit Programme

Site visits to the Institution/ SSPUs will last from 1.5 to 2 or 3 days, depending on the size of the Institution/ SSPUs. There will be meetings between the IR Panel and the senior management of the SSPUs, representatives of staff and students/ graduates, advisors and external stakeholders, and relevant personnel from the Institution Proper who have responsibility for the SSPUs, as necessary.

A sample site visit programme is at Appendix 3. The programme will be adjusted for different institutions as appropriate. JQRC will discuss with the Institution/ SSPUs regarding the visit programme prior to the visit. A list of the personnel meeting the IR Panel is expected to be provided to JQRC before the visit.

9. Outcome of Institutional Review

The IR will result in a Report containing

a. Observations on the quality assurance systems adopted for SFSD focusing on practices in the major SSPUs of the Institution
b. Recommendations for change / improvement
c. Recommendations for any follow up actions / reviews
d. Identification of good practice

Joint Quality Review Committee
Joint Quality Review Committee

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW

Guidelines for Submission of Information from Institutions / SSPUs

The Institutional Review is the second stage of the JQRC review framework for the Self-financed Sub-degree Programme Units (SSPUs). This follows the Preview stage and is a more in-depth investigation and review of the quality assurance processes used to ensure the quality of self-financed sub-degree programmes.

JQRC member institutions and their respective SSPUs should prepare submission documentation which should give evidence and relevant information according to the Institutional Review Framework stipulated by JQRC. The following guidelines aim to assist institutions to prepare a concise submission that contains the relevant information to demonstrate the quality assurance processes of SSPUs and which can assist the IR panels in the review process.

The Institutional Review Framework includes a section on Issues Considered in an Institutional Review. (“The Issues”) SSPUs should make reference to this section when preparing their submission.

“The Issues” include areas which have been covered in the Preview Criteria (Items (b) and (c) covering Programme Approval, and Quality Assurance of Programs). SSPUs should re-consider these items with reference to the Preview Criteria, and provide a brief summary incorporating any updates regarding their quality assurance systems and changes to structures and processes. They should also provide relevant important documentation as evidence of their systems / processes, where these have not been provided in the Preview. A copy of the Preview Criteria is attached for reference.

“The Issues” additionally seek information on the wider institutional context for supporting quality and quality assurance (Items (a) and (d)), such as institutional / SSPU processes / policies for academic planning, resource planning, and provision of student support.

“The Issues” further seek evidence of quality and quality assurance (Item (e)) : SSPUs may choose to demonstrate samples of good practice in their quality assurance systems. They can also use various indicators to
demonstrate the quality of their educational provision – these may relate to the input or outcome of programmes.

It is not the purpose of IR, at this stage, to review or assess individual programmes. However, SSPUs are advised to make use of selected programme(s) to demonstrate their quality assurance systems, such as their evolvement from design to delivery and on-going monitoring.

In addition to the submission made by the institutions, the IR Panel may request for additional information, or evidence of quality assurance for specific programmes, or relating to specific areas of concern, as necessary.

The following serves as a general guideline only and Institutions / SSPUs should feel free to decide on their format and content of submission.

**Part I**

**A Self-Assessment**

Institutions/ SSPUs may wish to prepare a brief self-assessment covering:

- a brief introduction of the SSPUs and the institutional context, including any plans / visions of development of the SSPUs.
- a brief description of major quality assurance and other developments in the SSPUs since the JQRC Preview, and
- an evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the present quality assurance system for SSPUs, including highlights of good practices.

**Part II**

**Submission Documentation focusing on**

*“The Issues Considered in Institutional Reviews”*

Evidence and information pertaining to:

(a) **Institutional Plans and Policies**

To demonstrate the wider institutional context for the operation of the SSPUs and their quality assurance, SSPUs should provide
information on the policies and processes for academic planning, including those for the formulation of plans for self-financed sub-degree provision. Information might include:

- the designated authorities / processes at institutional and/or SSPU level for formulating / coordinating the overall academic development of the SSPUs
- Institutional or SSPU policy governing the quality assurance of SFSD programmes.

(b) Authority for Programme Approval

This area had been covered at the Preview stage. (Please refer to Preview Criteria). However, to assist the IR Panel, it is suggested that SSPUs provides a brief summary covering the major approval authorities and approval routes, as well as an update on any changes. Reference should also be made to any specific comments in the Preview Report in this area.

Suggested documentation include:

- Brief summary of major approval authorities and approval routes
- Any changes to the designated approval authority or processes since the Preview
- Updated evidence pertaining to the process if these have not been provided at the Preview (eg. evidence of approval and report-back to central authorities, membership and terms of reference of the designated approval authorities etc.).

(c) Quality Assurance in respect of the approval, delivery, and monitoring of programmes

This area has been covered in the Preview stage. (Please refer to Preview Criteria). To assist the IR Panel, it is suggested that a brief overview of the major processes be provided. SSPUs should also revisit the topics and provide updates on changes, and updated / further evidence where these had not been provided at the Preview. Reference should be made to specific comments in the Preview Report.
Suggested documentation include:

- A brief overview of the systems and processes for the approval, delivery, and monitoring of SFSD programmes, incorporating any changes since the Preview

- The coverage and application of the quality assurance systems for all levels and types of SFSD programmes (including programmes delivered outside of the institution /outside Hong Kong)

- The effectiveness of the various domains of the quality assurance systems, and strengths and weaknesses identified

- Demonstration of the quality assurance system through evidence – suggested use of a programme or a number of programmes in an audit trail

- For the classification of programmes for the QR, an update on progress and developments since the Preview and since the initial uploading on the Qualifications Register (if applicable).

(d) Institutional Support for Quality

This section allows institutions / SSPUs to demonstrate how the wider institutional environment supports quality and quality assurance, with reference to institutional / SSPU policies.

Suggested documentation might include:

- Policies and procedures on the allocation of resources to programmes
- Policies governing staff qualifications, appointment and development,
- Policies for student services and support
- Policies on programme publicity and the dissemination of information to staff, students and other stakeholders

SSPUs may make use of programmes to demonstrate these macro institutional policies and processes. SSPUs may also wish to make reference to the polices of the Institution Proper where these impact upon the policies/ processes of the SSPU. Focus should be on:
• whether and how the institution / SSPU provide the appropriate and necessary environment for quality and quality assurance

• the consistency of application of the relevant processes for different types/ levels of programme and the rationale for differences.

(e) **Indicators of Quality / Quality Assurance**

This section allows the SSPUs to provide evidence of their good practices with respect to both their quality assurance systems, and the quality of their educational provision. SSPUs may wish to use specific programmes as examples, and also demonstrate how quality assurance processes have led to improvements in quality.

For **Good Practices in Quality Assurance**, suggested documentation might include:

• Examples of good practices / innovative practices in quality assurance

• Whether and how the Institution / SSPU encourage innovative practices in quality assurance

• Instances of good practices which can be or have been shared within or outside the Institution/SSPU.

For **Indicators of Quality**, SSPUs may choose to provide specific evidence, and these can include both the input or output side of programmes, such as

• Profile of student intake / profile of staff qualifications (for major / higher level programmes)

• Graduation figures (for major / higher level programmes)

• Professional recognition for programmes

• Instances of quality improvement in programmes.
The Submission

Institutions are advised to provide one submission for each Institution, rather than for individual SSPUs (although the submission may contain different sections pertaining to individual SSPUs. It is also recommended that the submission should focus on the work of the major and bigger SSPUs within each Institution.

In addition to the main submission, other documents such as SSPU Prospectus, Annual Reports, Student Handbooks, Quality Assurance Manuals, and other relevant documents may also be provided.

Institutions are advised to produce a concise rather than lengthy submission. It is suggested that the main documentation (covering Part I and II) should be brief and concise, and supporting documents/evidence may be provided as appendices.

Institutions are welcome to discuss with the JQRC Secretariat regarding the format and content of their submission at the preparatory stage. It is also suggested that institutions provide a list of the documents intended to be included in the submission and discuss with the Secretariat as to their inclusion. It is possible that some documentation (eg. reports, minutes etc.) may be displayed during the site visit for perusal by the IR Panel.

Contact:
JQRC Secretariat
Tel. 2948 1886
Fax. 2948 1850
Email: registry@jqrc.edu.hk
Website: www.jqrc.edu.hk

Joint Quality Review Committee
31 January 2007
JOINT QUALITY REVIEW COMMITTEE

Preview Criteria

Preview of Institutional Academic Quality Assurance Processes for Self-financed Sub-degree Programmes: Suggested Basic Requirements

While each member institution may have its own model of internal academic quality assurance, it is expected that there are basic core elements which are common to most academic quality assurance systems and which are in line with international good practices. For the purpose of the Preview, the following sets out some of the basic core elements which are, under normal circumstances, expected of member institutions in their academic quality assurance of self-financed sub-degree programmes, within the context of the self-accrediting authority vested in the institutions proper.

The core elements are categorized into the following areas:

- **The authority and the institutional processes for the approval of self-financed sub-degree programmes,**

- **The existence of an academic quality assurance system and processes to ensure the quality of these programmes,** and

- **The application of appropriate academic quality assurance systems and processes for determining the level and standard of these programmes for placement on the Qualifications Framework (QF).**

(A) **The authority and the institutional processes for the approval of self-financed sub-degree programmes**

1. There should be clearly designated authorit(ies) for the approval of self-financed sub-degree programmes, these being the same as those for the approval of degree level programmes, or otherwise suitably constituted with proper report back channels to the latter.

2. The approval of self-financed sub-degree programmes, if not granted by the same authority as for degree programmes, should be granted at least by the highest authority within or governing the Self-financed Sub-degree Programmes Unit (SSPU)* responsible for the awards.

3. The institution’s central authority e.g. Senate, should ensure that the self-financed sub-degree programmes are subject to the same rigour of academic quality assurance as for degree programmes both in respect of approval and implementation.
4. Relevant information should be provided to the central authority (whether in the approval process or the report-back process) including details of the proposed programme(s), and reports from the lower level bodies.

5. There should be provision for the central authority to exercise powers of sanction/ non-approval over the proposed self-financed sub-degree programme(s), as necessary.

(B) The existence of an academic quality assurance system and processes to ensure the quality of self-financed sub-degree programmes

1. Programme Design and Approval

   (a) The programme design and approval process should involve a critical examination of different aspects of the programme including its objective, content, demand, entry and exit standard, staffing and resource support, and management and monitoring.

   (b) The approval process should be conducted by a body independent of the proposing unit, involving a peer review process and where possible, involving external experts in the process.

   (c) There should be benchmarking processes to ensure that the programmes are comparable in standard to those in other local or overseas institutions, such as through peer review, validation, or other benchmarking exercises.

2. Academic Regulations/ Documentation

   (a) There should be clearly drawn up academic regulations governing the self-financed sub-degree programmes and these should be made known to staff and students.

   (b) There should be clear regulations governing the appointment and duties and responsibilities of staff and these should be made known to staff members.

   (c) There should be properly kept records of students and their assessment.

3. Award of qualifications

   (a) There should be clearly designated authorities to oversee the assessment of students and award of qualifications.

   (b) Reports on the award of qualifications should be submitted to suitable authorities at the SSPU and the institution’s central authority.

4. Programme monitoring

   (a) There should be designated authorit(ies) responsible for the monitoring and review/ re-approval of programmes, either at the SSPU level or the institution level.

   (b) The monitoring process should include, amongst others, reviews of the programme and the teaching quality, and should take into account the views of a range of stakeholders including staff and students.
(C) The application of appropriate academic quality assurance systems and processes for determining the level and standard of self-financed sub-degree programmes for placement on the QF

1. The classification of the self-financed sub-degree programmes for the QF should be considered by appropriate authorities within the SSPU or the institution proper.

2. Due consideration should have been given to various aspects pertaining to the QF, including the levels, the Generic Level Descriptors, the subject classifications, Common Descriptors for Associate Degree, and the format of the Qualifications Register (QR).

3. Appropriate discussion and consultation should take place within the institution and with external people and relevant organizations as appropriate (such as governmental bodies, other institutions, external advisors or employers, etc.), to ensure that the institution’s staff are suitably involved and/or informed in the establishment of the QF.

4. Efforts should be made to ensure that staff and students are aware of the proposed placement of the qualifications on the QF and the implications.

5. There should be processes and mechanisms in place for reviewing the classification and placement of self-financed sub-degrees on the QR in future.

(*Note: SSPU refers to the Continuing Education Unit or the Community College, or the department responsible for self-financed sub-degree programmes, as appropriate.)

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Joint Quality Review Committee

Institutional Review

Proposed Visit Programme

Day One

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<th>Session</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Programme</th>
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<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>9:00 am – 9:15 am</td>
<td>Introduction and briefing by Panel Chairman</td>
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| 2.      | 9:15 am – 12:00 noon| Panel Private Meeting
- Scrutiny of supplementary information
- Identification of issues
- Discussion of meeting agenda
(Tea break at around 10:45 am) |
|         | 12:00 noon – 2:00 pm | Lunch                                                                     |
| 3.      | 2:00 pm – 2:45 pm  | Meeting with Director / Deputy Director(s) and Senior Management of SSPU |
| 4.      | 2:45 pm – 3:45 pm  | Meeting with representatives of Board of Continuing Education and key Quality Assurance Committee(s) / Board(s) of SSPU |
|         | 3:45 pm – 4:00 pm  | Tea break                                                                 |
| 5.      | 4:00 pm – 4:30 pm  | Tour of SSPU facilities                                                   |
| 6.      | 4:30 pm – 5:15 pm  | Meeting with full-time / part-time staff representatives                  |
| 7.      | 5:15 pm – 6:00 pm  | Meeting with student and graduate representatives                        |
| 8.      | 6:00 pm – 6:30 pm  | Panel Private Meeting                                                     |
|         | 6:30 pm           | Depart for Panel Working Dinner                                           |

------------------------  End of Day One Programme  ------------------------

Appendix 3
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<tr>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Programme</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>9:15 am – 9:45 am</td>
<td>Panel Private Meeting</td>
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<td>10.</td>
<td>9:45 am – 10:30 am</td>
<td>Meeting with representatives of Senate and Quality Assurance Committee of Institution Proper</td>
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<td>10:30 am – 10:45 am</td>
<td>Tea break</td>
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<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>10:45 am – 11:45 am</td>
<td>Meeting with Division Heads, Course Coordinators and Programme Leaders</td>
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<td>12.</td>
<td>11:45 am – 12:45 pm</td>
<td>Meeting with external members (parallel session):</td>
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<td>• External Examiners / Members of Board of Examiners</td>
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<td>• External Course / Programme Assessors</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Programme Review / Validation Committee members / Advisory Committee (external members)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>12:45 pm – 2:00 pm</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
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<td>13.</td>
<td>2:00 pm – 2:45 pm</td>
<td>Meeting with Counsellors, Registry staff, Librarian and Committees on Resources Allocation, etc.</td>
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<td>14.</td>
<td>2:45 pm – 3:30 pm</td>
<td>Meeting with key members of Committees on Staff Appointment and Development, Research / Development and Human Resources Unit</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3:30 pm – 3:45 pm</td>
<td>Tea break</td>
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<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>3:45 pm – 5:30 pm</td>
<td>Panel Private Meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>5:30 pm - 6:00 pm</td>
<td>Concluding session with Senior Management of SSPU</td>
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<td></td>
<td>6:00 pm</td>
<td>Depart from SSPU</td>
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------------------------  End of Visit Programme  ------------------------