



This review was conducted in compliance with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG)

International Programme Accreditation

Gulf University for Science and
Technology

English Programmes:

BA English Literature

BA English Education

BA English Linguistics/Translation

External Quality Assurance Agency

The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education UK

Date of Accreditation Visit: 21-23 October 2024

Review Report

October 2024

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About this review

This is a report of an International Programme Accreditation conducted by The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) at Gulf University for Science and Technology. The review took place from 21 to 23 October 2024 and was conducted by a team of three reviewers, as follows:

- Professor Anca Greere
- Mr Paul Taylor
- Mr Matthew Kitching (student reviewer).

The QAA Officer for this review was Dr Julian Ellis.

International Programme Accreditation (IPA) offers institutions outside the UK the opportunity to have a review by the UK's The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education. The review benchmarks the institutions' quality assurance processes against international quality assurance standards set out in Part 1 of the [Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area \(ESG\)](#).

In International Programme Accreditation, the QAA review team:

- makes conclusion against each of the ten standards set out in Part 1 of the ESG
- makes conditions (if relevant)
- makes recommendations
- identifies features of good practice
- comes to an overall conclusion as to whether the institution meets the standards for International Programme Accreditation.

A summary of the findings can be found in the section: [Key findings](#). The section [Explanations of the findings](#) provides the detailed commentary.

The QAA website gives more information [about QAA](#) and its mission. A dedicated section explains the method for [International Programme Accreditation](#) and has links to other informative documents. For an explanation of terms see the [Glossary](#) at the end of this report.

Key findings

Executive summary

The Gulf University for Science and Technology (GUST) was established in 2002. GUST maintains strategic partnerships with universities in the United Kingdom, including the University of Liverpool and the University of Leeds, as well as with other universities in the United States, such as the University of Missouri Saint Louis (UMSL) and Missouri University for Science and Technology (S&T) to provide higher education in Kuwait and the GULF region. The University has three Colleges, delivers fifteen programmes and has over 3,500 students.

The three colleges are the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS), the College of Business Administration (CBA) and the College of Engineering and Architecture (CEA). The College of Arts and Sciences mission is to support the liberal arts and offers degrees in English Literature, Linguistics and Translation or Secondary Education as well as in Computer Science, and Mass Communication. CAS is also the home to several centres including the Interpreting Translation Centre. The English Department consists of twenty-four faculty staff with four new faculty members joining in Autumn 2024. There are 569 students in English Major Programmes, with 188 English literature students, 160 Linguistic and Translation students, and 221 English Education students,

The three major programmes delivered by the Department of English in English Literature, Linguistics and Translation and Secondary Education are intended to support students in developing their knowledge, skills and understanding and prepare them for future careers. This ambition is supported by paying attention to keeping the curriculum current and introducing changes where required to better align with contemporary developments and support student outcomes.

The English Department has responded to challenges around academic integrity by strengthening its policies and the use of detection software to safeguard academic standards.

GUST was the first private university in Kuwait to complete the Private University's Council voluntary accreditation process and was the only university ranked as "Excellent" in the 2008 – 2009 academic year. The University underwent its most recent accreditation review in the spring of 2018 and received continuing accreditation.

In reaching conclusions about the extent to which GUST meets the 10 ESG Standards, the QAA review team followed the evidence-based review procedure as outlined in the handbook for International Programme Accreditation (November 2023). The University provided the review team with a self-evaluation and supporting evidence. During the review visit, which took place from 21 to 23 October 2024, the review team held a total of nine meetings which included the University President, senior management team, academic staff, professional support staff, students, alumni and external stakeholders. The review team also had the opportunity to observe the University's facilities and learning resources.

In summary, the team found three examples of good practice and was able to make **nine recommendations for improvement/enhancement**. The recommendations are of a desirable rather than essential nature and are proposed to enable the University to build on existing practice which is operating satisfactorily but which could be improved or enhanced. The team did not set any conditions.

The team concluded that the BA English Literature offered by Gulf University for Science and Technology **meets** all standards for International Programme Accreditation.

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The team concluded that the BA English Education offered by Gulf University for Science and Technology **meets** all standards for International Programme Accreditation.

The team concluded that the BA English Linguistics/Translation offered by Gulf University for Science and Technology **meets** all standards for International Programme Accreditation.

QAA's conclusions about Gulf University for Science and Technology English Programmes

The QAA review team reached the following conclusions about the English programmes at Gulf University for Science and Technology:

- BA English Literature
- BA English Education
- BA English Linguistics/Translation.

European Standards and Guidelines

The **BA English Literature** meets all ten ESG Standards and Guidelines.

The **BA English Education** meets all ten ESG Standards and Guidelines.

The **BA English Linguistics/Translation** meets all ten ESG Standards and Guidelines.

Conditions

The team did not set any conditions.

Good practice

The QAA review team identified the following features of **good practice** at the English Department in the Gulf University for Science and Technology:

- the “Live Your Major” course which provides students with different experiences and insights in the field of learning, providing a professional orientation and the opportunity to practice the knowledge and skills they have acquired (ESG Standard 1.3)
- the use of the Student Performance Enhancement and Academic Retention (SPEAR) to support students throughout their academic journey and facilitates the monitoring of student progress, enrolment, and grade appeals. In addition, it facilitates the referral of students to the appropriate personnel, including the Dean, student advisors, and counsellors (ESG Standard 1.4)
- the use of the extensive range of personalised support services in all three programmes to help support student progression and achievement (ESG Standard 1.6).

Recommendations

The QAA review team makes the following **recommendations** to the English Department at the Gulf University for Science and Technology:

- to enhance its approach to the management of quality assurance by documenting all its processes and procedures (in line with the expectations of the University) so it contributes fully to a coherent institutional quality assurance system (ESG Standard 1.1)
- to develop a more systematic and structured approach to documenting engagement with external stakeholders (ESG Standard 1.1)

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- to develop a more structured way to document the quality assurance of internships (other than in public schools) before students start their learning experience (ESG Standard 1.1)
- to strengthen the design of the programmes to increase alignment between programme objectives, programme learning outcomes, curriculum content, labour market and employability data, and career prospects to offer a more realistic outlook of the expected graduate profile (ESG Standard 1.2)
- to incorporate staff assessment in the evaluation of peer tutors to assure the accuracy and quality of subject knowledge and advice provided to students by peer tutors (ESG Standard 1.6)
- to monitor and review information about the English programmes on the University website to ensure all programme content is comprehensive, accurate, clear and readily accessible (ESG Standard 1.8)
- to establish a systematic process for monitoring the ongoing accuracy of programme information on the University website (ESG Standard 1.8)
- to develop a more systematic approach to action planning, to improve programme level monitoring and feedback and engagement with stakeholders (ESG Standard 1.9)
- to develop an approach to identify, record and share learning from external quality assurance processes within the Department and across the three programmes (ESG Standard 1.10).

Explanation of the findings about Gulf University for Science and Technology English Programmes

This section explains the review findings in more detail.

Terms that may be unfamiliar to some readers have been included in a [brief glossary](#) at the end of this report. A fuller [glossary of terms](#) is available on the QAA website, and formal definitions of certain terms may be found in the operational description and handbook for the [review method](#), also on the QAA website.

Standard 1.1: Policy for quality assurance

Institutions should have a policy for quality assurance that is made public and forms part of their strategic management. Internal stakeholders should develop and implement this policy through appropriate structures and processes, while involving external stakeholders.

Findings

1.1 The Gulf University for Science and Technology (GUST) has a Quality Assurance Policy that covers an appropriate range of areas including programme evaluation and review, teaching and learning, teaching and learning, student support services, continuous improvement, compliance and accreditations, monitoring and evaluation. It is available publicly through GUST's website along with other policies and procedures, including the Assurance of Learning Policy which is designed to ensure that educational programmes at GUST meet their learning objectives and outcomes. The policy sets out minimum expectations for areas such as assessment methods, data collection, recording and reporting outcomes, and programme review. The policy also includes where responsibility lies for quality at the different levels within the University. The University's Accreditation and Quality Assurance Office aims to promote and develop a culture of academic excellence and continuous improvement, and a quality assurance policy designed to maintain and enhance the quality of education and services. Aspects of quality assurance within the English Department and three programmes were the focus for the International Programme Accreditation review team while the institutional level policy for quality assurance was explored in more detail by the International Quality Review Team (IQR) who conducted a visit to GUST at the same time as the IPA team¹.

1.2 The review team heard from senior staff that Departments are viewed as the driving force for improvements and developments and that Colleges and Departments have a level of autonomy to allow this to happen. This level of autonomy is explicit within the University Committee structure. For example, the responsibilities of the University Curriculum Committee make clear that each College should develop appropriate procedures for initiating and reviewing curriculum changes and that each college should have procedures consistent with guidelines established by the University Curriculum Committee. The details of English Department committees show that these responsibilities are structured across a range of different committees for decision making. The effectiveness of some of these committees is explored in relation to other standards, for example the Curriculum Committee is discussed in Standard 1.2, paragraph 2.5 and Promotion and Research Committee in Standard 1.5, paragraph 5.5.

1.3 The evidence submitted for this standard had a strong emphasis on the importance of having high quality faculty members to assure quality, in relation to their recruitment, evaluation of performance, promotion and mentoring for newly appointed staff. The approach of the English Department to recruitment and promotion is addressed within Standard 1.5, and quality of teaching and learning is addressed within Standard 1.3 (see below). The review team heard from newly appointed staff that their orientation week introduces key policies and procedures and makes clear their responsibilities for quality assurance. Students who met the team were also clear about the importance placed on their feedback and how their voice had the potential to be effective. For example, students told the review team that the Student Association had fed back about the small numbers of academic staff on the programmes and had later seen the hiring of new faculty members.

¹ For more information on the outcomes of the IQR review see: <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/reports/gulf-university-for-science-and-technology-igr-24.pdf>

1.4 The review team heard a strong commitment to quality assurance from all faculty members and that this is embedded through the English Department's quality assurance processes, and that staff were able to explain these processes to the IPA team. However, it was less clear where Departmental processes were documented. The University Quality Assurance Policy makes it clear that the Department's role includes developing, implementing, and monitoring quality assurance processes and initiatives. The review team consider that clearer documentation of quality processes within the Department would be beneficial to clarify responsibilities and provide a "handbook" of guidance for faculty members not familiar with the quality processes that need to be followed (primarily new faculty members but also those that have not worked through a process recently). The review team therefore **recommends** that the Department enhances its approach to the management of quality assurance by documenting its processes and procedures (in line with the expectations of the University) so it contributes fully to a coherent institutional quality assurance system.

1.5 One key example of the Department's focus on quality assurance, in line with the University's Quality Assurance Policy is the development of "Live Your Major" courses for students. These courses are aimed at increasing experiential learning and are project based with students conducting field visits, attending workshops and training provided by experts in relevant fields. Students were positive about these courses and felt that it helped with their studies and allowed them to apply their learning to practical situations (see also paragraph 3.6).

1.6 The "Live Your Major" Courses and internships were both identified by senior staff as ways in which external stakeholders' views and perspectives on the curriculum were considered. The review team was told that communication with providers of both live your major experiences and internships were usually face-to-face and not documented. The review team considered that it would be beneficial to the Department to record external stakeholder perspectives, especially if gathered through different mechanisms and by different faculty members. This would help the Department with evidence of how the programmes are kept current and in line with potential employer expectations. The review team therefore **recommends** that the Department develop a more systematic and structured approach to documenting engagement with external stakeholders.

1.7 Internships are offered across the programmes and are mandatory on the English Secondary Education programme where students spend a semester teaching in a school. For most students on the Education programme their internship is organised by the Ministry of Education who place the students in a school, usually close to their home where possible. For internships in private schools and those taken by students on the other two programmes the Department has a responsibility to ensure the quality of the experience before students start their internship. The review team consider it would be beneficial to have a record of any audit of internship providers that is conducted to document the quality of the internship provision. Similarly, a record of how internship providers are informed of the expectations of the course/programme students are completing would help document how the Department fulfills its obligation to oversee the quality assurance of learning experience provided by others. The review team believe that by building up these records, it could also help students to understand and see the sort of internship opportunities that might be available to them. The review team therefore **recommends** that the Department develops a more structured way to document the quality assurance of internships (other than in public schools) before students start their learning experience.

1.8 The review team identified some areas for improvement including formalising the Department's quality assurance arrangements, recording stakeholder feedback and strengthening the internship process. However, overall, because most quality assurance policies and processes are determined at the University level, and the Department's

consistent focus and emphasis on the quality of its educational provision with its strong focus on recruiting high quality staff the review team conclude that Standard 1.1 **is met**.

Standard 1.2: Design and approval of programmes

Institutions should have processes for the design and approval of their programmes. The programmes should be designed so that they meet the objectives set for them, including the intended learning outcomes. The qualification resulting from a programme should be clearly specified and communicated, and refer to the correct level of the national qualifications framework for higher education and, consequently, to the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area.

Findings

2.1 The University and as a result the College of Arts and Sciences and the English Department have processes for the design and approval of their programmes. The review team were informed that programme design and approval is regulated by the Private Universities Council (PUC) for all programmes of the University, including the three programmes under review. The programme teams confirmed that they align with PUC requirements which to some extent restrict them to making more major changes, where a programme re-design might be envisaged.

2.2 The three programmes under review include a degree of synergy in design with some courses from the programmes found to overlap as evidenced by the curriculum or Major sheets. The review team were told that these common courses are offered to all students across the programmes. The programmes also have packages of electives which allow a more individualised student journey, which students have reported they appreciate the range of choices available to them. The review team noted that the programmes do not include a graduation thesis or capstone requirement to produce a final year project.

2.3 The programmes are outlined through a programme description, on the website, which gives access to the Major Sheets containing the curricular components. An internal GUST application also gives admission requirements, career opportunities, programme outcomes and programme educational objectives. The programmes elaborate syllabi and detailed calendars, which become available to students once they have enrolled. For an external stakeholder, the overarching programme design only becomes clear when these multiple sources of information for the individual programmes are considered together to reveal the curriculum construction through the specific content covered in individual courses. Students, however, have indicated that they are able to navigate the system to find the information and that they find it accessible and sufficient.

2.4 The review team scrutinised the information available and found that there was some misalignment between programme objectives, programme outcomes, curricular content, career outlook and career opportunities. This included where programme learning outcomes are less measurable, which makes it difficult to make sure they can be achieved. For example, in English Literature, 'ability to use words to promote social change in their profession and society for the greater good'. Also, the formulation of programme learning outcomes does not map onto Bologna Process guidelines for preparing students for the labor market. This may become an impediment should the English Department wish to enter exchange arrangements with comparable programmes in the European Higher Education Area. Lastly, the careers promoted by the programmes include some professional opportunities which the programme content does not explicitly cover. For example, there are number of careers from across the three programmes such as speech language therapist or interpreter, professional or technical writing for companies, Archivist, Records Manager or Media Researcher which require more course content than is currently offered. To access these professions following graduation students require a wider range of knowledge and

skills than the programme provides under the current curriculum design. The review team **recommends** that the College strengthens the design of the programmes to increase alignment between programme objectives, programme learning outcomes, curriculum content, labour market and employability data, and career prospects. The review team considers that it would be beneficial once the alignment exercise has been completed to return to the course learning outcomes to ensure that these remain measurable and fully map onto programme learning outcomes. Similarly, the syllabi content, including recommended bibliography, some of which is outdated, the calendar outline and lesson plans would need to be considered for revision.

2.5 The three programmes under review have been in operation for many years and the meetings with various stakeholders confirmed that they see regular adjustments which serve as updates. The English Department's Curriculum and Assurance of Learning Committee receives proposals for curricular change, including adding, removing, and changing existing courses. However, the review team considered that the rationale behind these proposals was unclear at times and the team did not see evidence to show how these proposals had been arrived at and whether there is any internal data or external market views used to support change. Teaching staff maintain an active research role and keep close to the developments in their fields of study and frequently propose changes to the programmes. However, apart from limited discussion with external stakeholders, such as industry representatives who are often programme graduates, the programmes did not demonstrate sustained and sufficiently formalised market engagement (see also paragraph 1.6 above). In addressing the recommendation above to support redesign of the programmes, the review team considers it is important for the English Department to engage with a broad range of industry representatives.

2.6 The review team was presented with the GUST Design and Approval of New Programmes Policy and Procedure document, which was approved at the level of the College during the review visit. Additional evidence clarified that the development and continuous refinement of programmes to satisfy the evolving demands of students and society are guided by the University's Strategic Goal 2, which emphasises academic excellence and innovation. This means that moving forward this policy will guide design and approval activities for programmes being proposed.

2.7 While the programmes have overall objectives and learning outcomes they could be enhanced with greater articulation and alignment with course content and career prospects with a recommendation by the team to consider a re-design activity. Overall, the review team finds this Standard to be **met**.

Standard 1.3: Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment

Institutions should ensure that the programmes are delivered in a way that encourages students to take an active role in creating the learning process, and that the assessment of students reflects this approach.

Findings

3.1 The English Department are keen to ensure the programmes provide a positive educational experience for its students with sufficient learning resources and student support. Students and academic staff who met the review team indicated that there was a good variety of teaching methods employed, which are sufficiently interactive to maintain student motivation and in the view of the team meet the expectations of current pedagogical trends. It was also discussed how research findings by staff are used in the classroom to maintain currency of content offered during the individual courses taught by staff.

3.2 Student-centredness is understood as being responsive to student needs and accommodating of their academic capacities. Academic staff have highlighted various mechanisms by which they take into consideration their students' needs and adjust their teaching methodologies or the teaching content to ensure students can keep up and make full use of their intellectual capacities. Students have confirmed their voice is heard in relation to teaching and assessment requests. The introduction of Student Performance Enhancement and Active Retention (SPEAR) to monitor student progress, enrolment, and grade appeals will help staff to be more agile in identifying students who might be struggling or falling behind and to offer timely interventions.

3.3 Reasonable adjustments are made for students with special needs. The programmes have exemplified this approach in relation to deaf and blind students who have enrolled on the programmes. Visually impaired students can articulate their software needs and staff will receive professional development to accommodate the use of the software for the teaching and assessment activities. For students with hearing impairment, GUST promotes a peer student note-taker, who also offers social support and better community integration opportunities for the deaf students. This system is reported to be mutually beneficial. The review team considers that the programmes may benefit from engaging sign language interpreters, to support deaf students also because it would demonstrate an added professional path for graduates of the English Linguistics/Translation programme, while also promoting cultural values of the deaf community.

3.4 Specific technology is used in the classroom, with dedicated software employed across the three programmes, as necessary. The English Linguistics/Translation programme makes use of Computer Assisted Translation tools and subtitling software which are available to students in the Interpreting Translation Center (ITC) Laboratory facilities to aid students gain a better understanding of local and foreign cultures. Once students graduate, they are no longer able to access the facilities of GUST with such regularity and the review team believes it would be beneficial if the Translation courses could also promote freeware CAT-tools, which support the Arabic language, allowing students to become familiarised with a variety of tools rather than exclusively one computer-assisted translation tool.

3.5 The review team noted that the Translation strand was covered almost exclusively by the Head of Department who has the professional expertise and can relate to the language professions. This means that, while the components of the Translation strand are delivered to the satisfaction of students, the review team consider it may be advisable to distribute the course load to more staff members, thus offering more nuanced perspectives on the profession and providing cover for potential staff absence.

3.6 There are elective packages which offer students the possibilities to take a more individualised path to their education. Students found the options available to generate sufficient interest and assessed them to be in line with market opportunities they might be interested in once they graduate. All three curricula contain a course referred to as “Live Your Major” course which provides students with different experiences and insights in the field of learning, providing a professional orientation and the opportunity to practice the knowledge and skills they have acquired. In discussions with staff and students the review team concluded that this component of the curriculum brings a particularly positive contribution to the student experience and, hence, the review team identify the “Live Your Major” course a feature of **good practice**.

3.7 Internships are offered under the English Linguistics/Translation and the English Education programmes. Staff are responsible for finding internships for students under the former programme, while the latter will have internships distributed by the Ministry of Education. Whereas internships offer a good opportunity for students, the review team noted that due diligence was not particularly strong and, overall, the quality assurance mechanisms for internships could be strengthened, as the review team was presented only with a description of activities but no evidence to support the claims (see also paragraph 1.7). The review team did not meet any employers or internship providers, only graduates, consequently the relationship between the programmes and the internship mentors could not be evaluated.

3.8 The programmes recognise the difficulties which are emerging in relation to generative AI and the development of new regulations are likely to result in clear direction for AI usage. There are policies for plagiarism and students are made aware of academic integrity requirements, with teaching staff using Turnitin to identify plagiarism attempts. The consistent use of Safe Exam browser to provide assurance about online -exams provides reassurances about the integrity of assessment practices.

3.9 From the evidence the review team could see that assessments are clearly regulated to ensure fair treatment of students and rigorous application of grading procedures. Assessment approaches are explained in the syllabi and course calendars with components including active participation in seminar classes, mid-term exam, course assignment, and a final exam. Some disciplines practice continuous assessments and may propose weekly assignments which are then graded into a whole. Students found the assessments to be well aligned with the content taught and staff indicated that in designing the assignment briefs they are guided by the course learning outcomes.

3.10 The review team heard that individual feedback is provided to students on assessments so they may understand the areas of improvement they would need to focus on to further develop their performance. Students reported the feedback to be helpful and fair. They also were familiar with the appeal procedure and knew it is an available course of action, should it become necessary. However, in most cases students reported that any concerns are raised and resolved with the teacher directly who spends time to clarify misunderstandings about, among other things the grading procedure.

3.11 The review team found that the programmes had a student-focused approach in its academic offerings. Throughout the review, there was evidence that students needs are considered and academic staff have implemented various mechanisms by which they take into consideration both academic and support for students. The programmes effectively assesses students' achievement and progress, using robust systems to oversee and ensure academic integrity in the process. The review team considered therefore that Standard 1.3, Student-centred Learning Teaching and Assessment, to be **met**.

Standard 1.4: Student admission, progression, recognition and certification

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

Findings

4.1 Academic regulations are available on the University's website and the institution has a separate set of Admissions Regulations. The Academic Regulations set out detailed arrangements relating to progression, recognition and certification, including requirements to graduate with honours and for the provision of transcripts. The Admission Regulations describe the different admissions categories, arrangements for accreditation of prior learning and admissions requirements.

4.2 The Course Handbook also details entry requirements for programmes, which includes a High school GPA of 2.00 (60% equivalent) or higher and successful completion of the English and Math Placement Test or provision of a valid IELTS or TOEFL certificate. When applying, students must provide high school transcripts certified by the Private Education Department, Ministry of Education or an equivalency letter addressed to GUST from the Ministry of Education (Private Education Department), as well as suitable identification. Programmes also benefit from Student Recruitment Leaflets that detail entry criteria, tuition fees and payment schedules.

4.3 Students informed the team that they had been required to undertake the placement tests and sit an interview and that they considered the admissions arrangements were clear and transparent. They also informed the team that induction was comprehensive and included presentations on the website and the University's digital platforms, academic integrity and introduction to the library and allocation of an academic advisor.

4.4 With respect to progression, the University has developed the Student Performance Enhancement and Academic Retention (SPEAR) system. SPEAR is designed to support students throughout their academic journey and facilitates the monitoring of student progress, enrolment, and grade appeals. In addition, it facilitates the referral of students to the appropriate personnel, including the Dean, student advisors, and counsellors. The University informed the team that the objective of this system is to improve students' educational experience through the provision of targeted support. The team found that despite the recent inception of SPEAR it was already being used at programme level to stage effective interventions with individual students. The team therefore considers use of the SPEAR system to deliver targeted interventions that support retention and progression to be a feature of **good practice**.

4.5 The Admissions and Registration Department is responsible for maintaining all student academic records. The Academic Regulations state that GUST follows a philosophy of progressive evaluation throughout each course and that students should enquire regarding their academic performance from their instructor during the semester. The University has an Academic Standing Policy in place that sets out penalties if student performance drops below the required baseline, including dismissal. Final grade reports are available from the Registration and Enrolment Department at the end of each semester. The team found that the grade reports, combined with the use of SPEAR, and implementation of the Academic Standing Policy provide an effective framework for monitoring and managing student progression.

4.6 The University also has a Minimal Attendance Policy in place designed to support student progression. The policy is embedded in the Academic Regulations and outlines a detailed process for issuing warnings, including automatically through the “PeopleSoft” Student Information System (PSIS). The policy is communicated to students through the Student Handbook, including examples of excused absence and the sanctions for missing classes. Students confirmed to the team that they were aware of the policy and that it was consistently applied.

4.7 To graduate, the academic regulations state that ‘All degrees at GUST have a minimum graduation requirement of 120 credits, and both the student’s cumulative and major grade point averages must be 2.00 or greater’. Students must apply to graduate through PSIS and students with a GPA of 3.67 or greater will graduate with honours.

4.8 The Registration and Enrolment Department conducts a degree audit to confirm that students have completed all programme requirements and can be awarded a qualification. The Department also issues transcripts of credits to a student upon request. Requests for transcripts by organisations financially supporting a student or providing tuition reimbursement are not honoured unless the student has filed an electronic consent with the Registration and Enrolment Department authorising the release of such records. Transcripts are not issued to or for students who have financial obligations to the University until those obligations are paid in full. The team viewed samples of degree certificates and transcripts that were accurate and fit-for-purpose.

4.9 The University’s admission regulations and processes are effective, consistent and transparent. Student recruitment and admission decisions are taken fairly, and students consider the induction programme is comprehensive and helps them prepare for their programmes. There are mechanisms in place to support student progression and clearly established regulations for awarding qualifications and issuing transcripts and certificates. The review team therefore concludes that Standard 1.4 Student admission, progression, recognition and certification is **met**.

Standard 1.5: Teaching staff

Institutions should assure themselves of the competence of their teachers. They should apply fair and transparent processes for the recruitment and development of the staff.

Findings

5.1 The English Department follows the University processes for recruitment of staff. Faculty members require approval from the Private University's Council (PUC), Kuwait. Faculty members are required to have a PhD, a minimum of one year's teaching experience and a publication record. GUST has a faculty recruitment policy and recruitment is overseen by a Faculty Recruitment Committee. The Faculty Hiring Policy briefly sets out responsibilities for key stages of the recruitment process from justifying the need for recruitment, selection and interview of candidates through to recommendations for hiring that are approved by the Vice-principal Academic Affairs. An Employment Policy clearly sets out a set of rules that must be followed during the employment process including a series of Employment Conditions which applicants and potential successful candidates must fulfil, including. The Criteria for Academic Positions sets out the criteria that need to be satisfied for the following posts Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, Full Professor. Vacancies are published on-line with job descriptions and required academic qualifications. The review team considers that together these policies show that the English Department make use of the University's clear, transparent and fair processes for staff recruitment and conditions of employment to ensure they have appropriate numbers of suitably qualified and experienced staff. The review team suggests that it may be beneficial to avoid over-relying on the expertise of key faculty members by considering growing the range of expertise (through recruitment and staff development) to support growth, succession planning and sustainability of the three programmes (see also paragraph 3.5).

5.2 Periodic hiring cycles take place to guarantee there are sufficient faculty members. The review team was told that the English Department consists of twenty-four faculty members and staff with four new faculty members joining in autumn 2024. New faculty staff benefit from an orientation week where they receive a full introduction to GUST and the faculty which includes key policies and procedures. New staff are also allocated a mentor and, once teaching, have developmental class observations. New staff met by the review team praised the way they were introduced to GUST and the Department and said that it was very collegiate and felt that all staff were supportive and welcoming and had an open door/ask anything approach.

5.3 The Department aims to foster a culture of continuous learning and scholarly activity among the faculty and staff confirmed that there is a regular series of CPD and training that established staff can sign up for. Staff provided examples of recent workshops around new research tools, statistical tools and research seminars. There were also workshops provided by the Department's partner institution (Missouri University) in Feb 2023 around techniques for increasing student engagement. GUST also sponsors a faculty fellowship programme that allows staff to spend time in other institutions, particularly for collaborative research. Details seen about the programme for Summer 2023 clearly set out the background to the scheme, eligibility requirements, the application and selection process. Faculty members met by the review team were positive about the opportunities available to them for their personal development and the benefit to their teaching.

5.4 A Faculty Merit system is in place that evaluates the competency of staff in terms of their teaching and research. This faculty performance evaluation is conducted at the end of each academic year and may result in salary increases or bonus payments. Staff were positive about this system (combined with the range of feedback received from students) in

helping them to reflect on their performance over the year, to identify any development areas and to stimulate change and improvements. Where a faculty members performance falls below expectations there is a structured approach to facilitate improvement (mentoring and targeted professional development).

5.5 Consideration of staff for promotion follows the Faculty Promotion Policy which sets out the procedure, use of external reviewers and criteria used (for teaching, research and services). External reviewers are used to provide their evaluation of the applicant's research portfolio and their assessment of whether a candidate should be promoted. Preliminary evaluation of applications is considered by the English Department Promotion and Research Committee and then submitted by the College Dean for consideration at University level. Staff clearly understood the promotion process and senior staff confirmed that they are there to support staff when they are considering applying for promotion.

5.6 In addition to faculty members saying they appreciated and benefitted from the range of development opportunities available to them they stated that this also encouraged them to be innovative in their teaching. One example related to the introduction of software for subtitling within the ITC Lab to reflect professional working practice. Another example was the introduction of artificial intelligence to enhance students' writing skills.

5.7 GUST has transparent processes for recruitment, effective departmental support for new staff and the provision of a range of staff development accessed by faculty members. Jointly these processes were seen positively by faculty members, felt to be supportive and encouraged them to be innovative in their teaching. The review team concludes therefore Standard 1.5 Teaching staff **is met**.

Standard 1.6: Learning resources and student support

Institutions should have appropriate funding for learning and teaching activities and ensure that adequate and readily accessible learning resources and student support are provided.

Findings

6.1 The University provides a wide range of student support services to meet the needs of its student population. These include qualified tutors, counsellors, and advisors to help students in their academic and personal development, which the University considers ensures they receive all necessary support throughout their educational journey. All departments are required to provide an annual budgetary plan to the Finance Department, ahead of the academic year to ensure that necessary resources are allocated to each unit and high-quality education is provided. In addition, the University has a Student Support Policy in place that outlines the responsibilities and expectations for the Faculty Support Group. The group includes any staff who are responsible for assisting students during their academic journey to ensure their 'optimal engagement and learning excellence.'

6.2 The policy also contains the Logistic Manual for the Disability Services Area that details support available through the One Stop Students Services Centre for students with disabilities, including exam proctoring, oral examinations, note taking services and use of tape recordings. The University has a Disability Centre in place and students who require special assistance are required to submit their medical reports at the beginning of the semester to ensure that their requirements are adequately addressed.

6.3 Furthermore, the University has a Learning Support Services Logistics Manual in place that serves as the institution's Learning Resources Strategy. The Learning Support Services area mission is to help students become better independent learners and help them to achieve their personal and educational goals by promoting the learning strategies and attitude necessary for academic success. The manual outlines a range of services to meet this mission including a peer tutor programme and programme of academic skills workshops.

6.4 Outstanding students who are interested in peer tutoring are encouraged to apply for a position with candidates subsequently invited to an interview with the supervisor of the Peer Tutoring Centre. The Head of Department meets with the shortlisted candidates to provide final approval. To be eligible, any interested student must meet the following criteria: 1) student should have completed a minimum of sixty credit hours, 2) minimum of a B grade in a course to be eligible to teach that course. Peer tutors receive training for the role. However, while tutored students provide feedback about their satisfaction with the scheme, staff from the English programmes do not directly monitor the advice provided by peer tutors. Given that the advice provided by peer tutors is assisting students with credit bearing classes, the team considered this is an area that should be strengthened. The team considered that the service could be strengthened if peer tutors benefit from feedback or appraisals from subject experts about the quality of their advice and work. The review team therefore **recommends** that the English Department incorporate staff assessment in the evaluation of peer tutors to assure the accuracy and quality of subject knowledge and advice provided to students by peer tutors.

6.5 The institution also has an Academic Advising and Retention Policy and Procedure in place. The goal of the policy is to support students throughout their academic journey, from enrolment to timely graduation. GUST seeks to achieve this by facilitating intellectual and personal development, enhancing academic performance and streamlining graduation for students. The policy sets out student, faculty and advisor responsibilities, arrangements for

confidentiality and the annual timeline for advising. Advisors are available to aid students in the development of a personalised academic plan and in the selection of courses that are most appropriate for their academic needs. Advisors maintain records of student consultations online and these records can be shared with other colleagues, including the Dean, to assist student support.

6.6 GUST has two counsellors on campus who are available to provide and evaluate the mental health of students. Counsellors conduct private sessions with students to understand their needs and concerns. Faculty members are also permitted to recommend students who they believe may require the help of advisors and counsellors. Students confirmed to the team that there are a wide range of tutorial, advice and support services in place to assist them during their studies. The team considers that the programmes' use of the extensive range of personalised support services that help support student progression and achievement to be a feature of **good practice**.

6.7 The review team learnt that the library holds 24,567 books, 168,802 eBooks, 110,453 e-Journals, 160 Audio-visual materials, thirty bibliographic/full-text databases, modern study facilities, and state-of-the-art IT infrastructure, enhancing the overall learning experience for students. The team viewed the library resources relevant to the English programmes and determined these were appropriate and would help students to meet the aims of the courses.

6.8 In May 2024, the University launched the Student Advisory Board designed to gather feedback to support enhancement. Students from the English Department raised concerns about staff turnover in the initial meeting. The team received confirmation from the Department and from students that several staff appointments had been made, partly in response to the feedback, and that the issue had been addressed. The Student Satisfaction Report 2023 canvasses student opinion about a wide range of aspects about their experience, including counselling, career support, the library and health services and found that 95% of students were very satisfied, satisfied or neutral on their experience.

6.9 The University operates wide range of effective support services and possesses high-quality premises and learning resources. In addition, feedback surrounding these arrangements is actively sought and responded to by the University. The review team concludes therefore Standard 1.6 Learning resources and student support **is met**.

Standard 1.7: Information management

Institutions should ensure that they collect, analyse and use relevant information for the effective management of their programmes and other activities.

Findings

7.1 Two key data systems are used in the English Department to manage programmes and other activities. ASANA software is used to track and manage progress towards meeting the University strategic goals for any departmental projects that are taking place. Student Performance Enhancement and Academic Retention (SPEAR) is an internally developed system that is used to track, analyse and improve student performance, progression and retention rates.

7.2 One recent project that staff identified as being successfully managed through to implementation using ASANA was the establishment of an Interpreting and Translation Centre (ITC) Lab for the English Department, the first of its kind in Kuwait. This Lab provides a range of computer facilities including translation software and translation booths to benefit student learning. The introduction of this facility is in line with College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) strategic goal of innovation and experiential education. Students were positive about the ITC Lab and its use during taught sessions and for their independent studies.

7.3 Staff attributed an improvement in student retention to SPEAR because it helps faculty members to easily see student performance data and to flag the need for more support from both tutors and academic advisors. Faculty staff make use of SPEAR throughout the semester but particularly once mid-term assessments are completed, so that any early flags for support can be identified. The review team were told that SPEAR continues to be developed as extra sources of student engagement data are identified for inclusion in the system, for example, attendance recording and library usage) (see also paragraph 4.4).

7.4 In addition to these two key systems a range of other methods and tools are used within the Department to gather data to help inform the management of the programmes. Towards the end of each course students are required to complete a “mandatory” Course and Instructor Evaluation Survey. This was described as mandatory because students must complete the survey to register for their next semester. However, it was clarified to the review team that this was a strategy to encourage students to complete the survey and that after a set deadline students would be able to register for their next semester regardless of whether the course evaluation had been completed. Students saw the benefit of providing this feedback and were confident about the anonymity of their responses. In addition, GUST conduct a Student Satisfaction survey that is analysed by College, Department and Major.

7.5 A Faculty Feedback Programme is also conducted after each semester where faculty members evaluate the courses they have been teaching, identify any good practice or limitations and indicate any areas for improvement. The feedback evaluates achievement of learning outcomes, grade distribution and gathers tutors’ reflections on their own performance.

7.6 Learning resources and student support are analysed through a range of usage data as well as informal discussions with students about the support resources available. Any proposed new courses need to identify any extra resources needed, and these requests are signed off by the Head of Department and library staff. Support staff stated that they meet regularly to identify new developments that have been identified. One of the recent examples provided was the introduction of an event planning system for student clubs. This was

introduced in response to student requests for greater support around how to manage the planning of events and to provide a more real-world experience to students of event planning and management.

7.7 These various systems and processes for collecting and analysing information show that the Department effectively collects and manages information about the three programmes. Data on student satisfaction shows the position of the Department and the three majors compared to other GUST provision and identifies areas for attention or improvement. Students were positive about their learning experiences, tutor expertise, resources and support available. The review team's tour of facilities included the ITC Lab, Library and Office for Student Life further confirmed the effective management taking place based on analysis of information collected and analysed.

7.8 Within the Department reliable data is collected, analysed and used to effectively manage the three programmes and associated activities, in particular student performance and progression. The review team concludes therefore that Standard 1.7 Information Management **is met**.

Standard 1.8: Public information

Institutions should publish information about their activities, including programmes, which is clear, accurate, objective, up-to date and readily accessible.

Findings

8.1 The review team heard from senior staff that the University ensures its information is readily accessible through a variety of channels, including the University website, brochures, and communication materials, to keep external stakeholders, faculty, staff and students up to date on all new information. Specifically, the institution states that information about their range of programmes, including selection criteria, programme learning outcomes, course descriptions and major sheets is readily accessible to all stakeholders.

8.2 The Data Protection Policy and Branding Guidelines of GUST govern the University's approach to public information. The institution informed the team that they consider this policy guarantees that all public-facing communications and information disclosures meet institutional values, adhere to legal requirements established by the State of Kuwait, and preserve the University's brand integrity.

8.3 GUST also consider that they have established protocols for the announcement of significant events and faculty and academic accomplishments. The Public Relations (PR) Department and the Office of Student Life facilitate this process and work to guarantee that information is disseminated in a timely and accurate manner. The Research & Development Office routinely disseminates information, including research publications, awards, and conference presentations through University channels such as the official website and email newsletters.

8.4 The team found that while certain programme information is available through the GUST website it is not comprehensive or easily navigable, partly owing to a potentially confusing menu structure. Programme and course titles are available from the main website, as is information about the career outlook for each programme and major sheets that outline the credit load. However, the team found some inconsistencies between the current major sheets and those available online. Programme learning outcomes are only accessible through the Apps platform, which prospective students do not have access to, and there is little detailed information about the programmes' teaching, learning and assessment strategies or pass rates. Course descriptions also vary in depth and content. Furthermore, the academic regulations posted online are a precis of the full regulations. The review team therefore **recommends** that the Department monitor and review information on the University website about its programmes to ensure all programme information is comprehensive, accurate, clear and readily accessible.

8.5 The review team were informed that academic departments are responsible for the development of public information pertaining to their programmes and the Head of Department approves the accuracy of academic content, while the PR Department ensure that any information is produced under the brand guidelines. The Dean must also approve published information. Evidence provided by the institution demonstrated examples of public information being discussed internally before publication and arrangements for the ongoing monitoring of information are less apparent and are not set out clearly. The institution informed the team that the Head of Department conducts periodic checks and has the authority to make minor changes. However, given the issues identified above, and without clear evidence demonstrating this approach, the review team therefore **recommends** that the Department establish a systematic process for monitoring the ongoing accuracy of its programme information on the University website.

8.6 The team concluded that while there is room to improve programme content on the website and establish a systematic process for monitoring information the team found essential information is available to the public, including on request. Additionally, stakeholders, including students, confirmed to the team that they can access the necessary information to meet their needs. The team therefore concludes that Standard 1.8 Public Information **is met**.

Standard 1.9: Ongoing monitoring and periodic review of programmes

Institutions should monitor and periodically review their programmes to ensure that they achieve the objectives set for them and respond to the needs of students and society. These reviews should lead to continuous improvement of the programme. Any action planned or taken as a result should be communicated to all those concerned.

Findings

9.1 Senior managers in the College of Arts and Sciences informed the review team that no internal periodic review takes place at institutional level, the University policy on periodic review relates to the external evaluation and reporting requirements of the Private Universities Council (PUC) on a 4-year cycle for re-accreditation. It is a requirement of the PUC that each programme at the University should partner with an international higher education provider for their cyclical evaluation. The English programmes have a partnership with Missouri University for Science and Technology which evaluates the programmes and reports directly to the PUC on their findings (see also ESG 1.1 and ESG 1.10). The review team inquired about developments to the programmes which might have been triggered by PUC/University of Missouri recommendations, but no examples were provided for reasons of confidentiality under the non-disclosure agreement with the PUC.

9.2 For course evaluation and annual monitoring, the outcomes of student surveys are used and feed into an annual report which includes quantitative and qualitative analysis of the course and recommendations for improvements. In addition, the team heard that at the end of the academic year, teachers adjust their courses based on outcomes from the student surveys, their own observations regarding the course content or from their ongoing research activities and scholarly engagements. The Faculty Feedback on Programmes provided evidence of course learning outcomes being met and improvements proposed for the courses. However, the review team noted that faculty feedback does not collate these findings into a programme-wide approach. The process for minor course changes includes approval by the Head of Department who also monitors the courses to find out if any more substantive action may be required due to the cumulation of minor changes. For major changes approval goes to the English Department's Curriculum and Assurance of Learning Committee followed by the College Curriculum Committee, and then the University Curriculum Committee for final approval. Major changes are also reported to the PUC on an ongoing basis.

9.3 The review team saw a Learning Analytics report with data for a selection of courses grouped under the descriptor of Writing and offered across all three programmes. The Learning Analytics report records programme performance below average and identified potential explanations for this trend; it also formulated recommendations. However, no action plan was presented to the review team to indicate how the recommendations might be taken forward, what timeline for action is being proposed and where the responsibility would lie for monitoring of progress. Consequently, it was difficult to find out priorities and whether any intermediary milestones had been achieved. In addition, the review team saw the Learning Support Services Area Action Plan for the Academic Year 2023-2024 based on the Student Feedback. The Action Plan includes dates for action, responsible person, resources and desired outcomes focused on the University level, and specifically the tutoring service. A Student Satisfaction Report is issued at University level and the review team were told that no action plan was produced as results proved within satisfactory parameters.

9.4 Overall, the review team found that in the English department annual monitoring activities are primarily linked to courses rather than the programme overall. The monitoring activities and action planning are often tackled incrementally by direct feedback from students and staff, without there being a more strategic outlook. The team believes the Department would benefit from introducing a more robust approach to action planning and improving stakeholders' awareness of changes to courses and programmes by operating a feedback loop. Therefore, the review team **recommends** that the Department develops a more systematic approach to action planning, to improve programme level monitoring and feedback and engagement with stakeholders.

9.5 The team concluded that while ongoing monitoring activities, annual reporting and periodic review are determined at the institutional level there is the opportunity to use the multiple sources of information available to enable the Department to become better at action-planning for purposes of monitoring and improvement. Overall, the review team found this standard to be **met**.

Standard 1.10: Cyclical external quality assurance

Institutions should undergo external quality assurance in line with the ESG on a cyclical basis.

Findings

10.1 The University is regulated and authorised by the Private Universities Council (PUC) under the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) in Kuwait. This regulation requires GUST to establish a partnership with an international university that provides the required programmes and has been approved by the National Bureau for Accreditation and Quality Assurance and PUC. The partner institution must endorse new academic programmes before the PUC approves them. The partner institution for the three programmes under review is University of Missouri – St Louis (UMSL). GUST is required to undergo physical visits by the PUC every four years so it can be reaccredited. As part of this process the PUC obtains a report from UMSL about the programmes, but this is not seen by staff in the English Department.

10.2 Academic staff emphasised that their work with the University of Missouri is collaborative and involves discussions around any suggested changes, before reaccreditation with the PUC. Based on an example agenda for January 2021 reviews by UMSL appear to take place over two days and include meetings with GUST's President, senior staff from the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS), including the English Department, programme academic staff and students. Senior staff from the College of Arts and Sciences staff stated that the latest review work with UMSL was approximately 18 months ago. The review team were told that they were unable to see any recent reports or outcomes from the latest PUC re-accreditation because they are confidential and embargoed.

10.3 In some cases, courses from the English programmes are subject to quality assurance by a variety of external professional accreditation processes, for example, for engineering, business and communication programmes. For these English programmes sitting within other departments and colleges, enrolment on an English course is mandatory with CAS acting as a service department for other subject areas by providing these courses. Changes required by these accreditations processes are overseen and approved by both CAS level Curriculum and Assurance of Learning Committee and University level Curriculum Committee.

10.4 The commitment of CAS to the benefit of external quality assurance was evident in what the review team heard. The University President was clear that they seek the best accreditation partner for all programmes and that was why they sought IPA from the QAA for the three English programmes. This also fitted with their strategic plans to build greater effective partnerships with UK universities and therefore external scrutiny from a UK perspective would be beneficial. Senior staff in CAS confirmed they considered external quality assurance provides beneficial scrutiny from different perspectives, a driver to help attain externally set standards, enable the identification of any gaps in their programme provision and to help improve policies and processes. Academic staff from the programmes expressed a similar perspective stating that each accreditation can help ensure that programmes are suitably aligned with provision internationally. Staff also confirmed that external scrutiny helps to assure both themselves and their students that the programmes are of suitable quality. The review team therefore found that CAS is committed to the benefit of external quality assurance, that it offers staff new perspectives and can assure staff of the quality of their provision.

10.5 What was less evident was the learning gained from preparing for external quality assurance. Senior staff stated that there were no areas that they felt they needed to work on

while preparing their submission of evidence for this IPA review. The review team were not provided with any detailed evidence of outcomes from engagement with external bodies or specific examples of changes made to the three programmes because of external review. As stated, feedback from PUC was confidential and the team were told that feedback from University of Missouri is always verbal and therefore not minuted or recorded. In view of this, the review team **recommends** that an approach is developed to identify, record and share learning from external quality assurance processes within the English Department and across the three programmes.

10.6 The programmes are reviewed on a regular basis by the University of Missouri – St Louis (UMSL) who report their findings to Private Universities Council (PUC). In addition, some English courses from the three programmes are subject to accreditation by professional bodies and it was evident that the University and the College were aware of the benefits of external scrutiny. The review team concluded therefore that the standard 1.10 **is met**.

Glossary

Action plan

A plan developed by the institution after the QAA review report has been published, which is signed off by the head of the institution. It responds to the recommendations in the report and gives any plans to capitalise on the identified good practice.

Annual monitoring

Checking a process or activity every year to see whether it meets expectations for standards and quality. Annual reports normally include information about student achievements and may comment on the evaluation of courses and modules.

Collaborative arrangement

A formal arrangement between a degree-awarding body and another higher education provider. These may be degree-awarding bodies with which the institution collaborates to deliver higher education qualifications on behalf of the degree-awarding bodies. Alternatively, they may be other delivery organisations who deliver part or all of a proportion of the institution's higher education programmes.

Condition

Conditions set out action that is required. Conditions are only used with unsatisfactory judgements where the quality cannot be approved. Conditions may be used where quality or standards are at risk/continuing risk if action is not taken or if a required standard is not met and action is needed for it to be met.

Degree-awarding body

Institutions that have authority, for example from a national agency, to issue their own awards. Institutions applying to IQR may be degree-awarding bodies themselves or may collaborate to deliver higher education qualifications on behalf of degree-awarding bodies.

Desk-based analysis

An analysis by the review team of evidence, submitted by the institution, that enables the review team to identify its initial findings and subsequently supports the review team as it develops its review findings.

Enhancement

See **quality enhancement**.

European Standards and Guidelines

For details, including the full text on each standard, see www.enqa.eu/index.php/home/esg.

Examples of practice

A list of policies and practices that a review team may use when considering the extent to which an institution meets the standards for review. The examples should be considered as a guide only, in acknowledgment that not all of them will be appropriate for all institutions.

Externality

The use of experts from outside a higher education provider, such as external examiners or external advisers, to assist in quality assurance procedures.

Facilitator

The member of staff identified by the institution to act as the principal point of contact for the QAA officer and who will be available during the review visit, to assist with any questions or requests for additional documentation.

Good practice

A feature of good practice is a process or way of working that, in the view of a QAA review team, makes a particularly positive contribution to the institution's higher education provision.

Lead student representative

An optional voluntary role that is designed to allow students at the institution applying for IQR to play a central part in the organisation of the review.

Oversight

Objective scrutiny, monitoring and quality assurance of educational provision.

Peer reviewers

Members of the review team who make the decisions in relation to the review of the institution. Peer reviewers have experience of managing quality and academic standards in higher education or have recent experience of being a student in higher education.

Periodic review

An internal review of one or more programmes of study, undertaken by institutions periodically (typically once every five years), using nationally agreed reference points, to confirm that the programmes are of an appropriate academic standard and quality. The process typically involves experts from other higher education providers. It covers areas such as the continuing relevance of the programme, the currency of the curriculum and reference materials, the employability of graduates and the overall performance of students. Periodic review is one of the main processes whereby institutions can continue to assure themselves about the academic quality and standards of their awards.

Programme of study

An approved course of study that provides a coherent learning experience and normally leads to a qualification. UK higher education programmes must be approved and validated by UK degree-awarding bodies.

Quality enhancement

The process by which higher education providers systematically improve the quality of provision and the ways in which students' learning is supported.

QAA officer

The person appointed by QAA to manage the review programme and to act as the liaison between the review team and the institution.

Quality assurance

The systematic monitoring and evaluation of learning and teaching, and the processes that support them, to make sure that the standards of academic awards meet the necessary standards, and that the quality of the student learning experience is being safeguarded and improved.

Recognition of prior learning

Assessing previous learning that has occurred in any of a range of contexts including school, college and university, and/or through life and work experiences.

Recommendation

Review teams make recommendations where they agree that an institution should consider developing or changing a process or a procedure in order to improve the institution's higher education provision.

Reference points

Statements and other publications that establish criteria against which performance can be measured.

Self-evaluation document

A self-evaluation report by an institution. The submission should include information about the institution as well as an assessment of the effectiveness of its quality systems.

Student submission

A document representing student views that describes what it is like to be a student at the institution, and how students' views are considered in the institution's decision-making and quality assurance processes.

Validation

The process by which an institution ensures that its academic programmes meet expected academic standards and that students will be provided with appropriate learning opportunities. It may also be applied to circumstances where a degree-awarding institution gives approval for its awards to be offered by a partner institution or organisation.

QAA2874 - R14689 - Jan 25

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