International Quality Review of The University of Fiji

February 2022

Contents

About this review

This is a report of an International Quality Review conducted by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) at The University of Fiji. The review took place 7-10 February 2022 and was conducted by a team of three reviewers, as follows:

- Dr Simon Jones
- Mr Ian Kimber (International reviewer)
- Mr Matthew Kitching (student reviewer).

The QAA Officer for this review was Dr Yue Song.

International Quality Review (IQR) offers institutions outside the UK the opportunity to have a review by the UK's Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA). The review benchmarks the institution's quality assurance processes against international quality assurance standards set out in Part 1 of the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG).

In International Quality Review, the QAA review team:

- makes conclusion against each of the 10 standards set out in Part 1 of the ESG
- makes recommendations
- identifies features of good practice
- comes to an overall conclusion as to whether the institution meets the 10 standards for International Quality Review

A summary of the findings are given in the following section: Key findings with a fuller commentary in Explanations of the findings.

The QAA website gives more information about QAA and its mission. A dedicated section explains the method for International Quality Review and has links to other informative documents. For an explanation of terms used in this document, see the Glossary at the end of this report.

Key findings

Executive summary

The University of Fiji (UoF) was founded in 2005 as a private higher education institution owned by the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha of Fiji. The University is governed and regulated by *The University of Fiji Act 2011*, to provide local, regional and international post-secondary education. The University is registered with the Fiji Higher Education Commission, for a period of seven years from 2016 to 2023. It is also recognised as a university by the statutory Fiji Higher Education Commission (FHEC), under the premise of the *Higher Education Act 2008*.

The University of Fiji provides five Schools and one Centre which are: Umanand Prasad School of Medicine and Health Sciences; Justice Devendra Pathik School of Law; School of Business and Economics; School of Science and Technology; School of Humanities and Arts; and the Centre for i-Taukei Studies which teaches and promotes indigenous Fijian culture, history and language.

The University offers programmes through its Schools and Centre at the Certificate, Diploma, undergraduate and postgraduate levels, in Accounting, Economics, Management, Computing Science, Information Technology, Mathematics, Law, International Relations and Diplomacy (INRD), Medicine, Nursing and Public Health. All programmes have attained recognition, and registration to the FHEC.

The University's main Campus is in Saweni, Lautoka with an additional campus located in Samabula, Suva. To continue with the learning and teaching process while complying with the COVID-19 protocols, many transformations were undertaken by the University in 2020 and developed in 2021, including offering all programmes through the hybrid (online/face-to-face) mode; moving student registration online; digital marketing; and developing virtual counselling and consultation services for both staff and students. There are currently 3,307 students enrolled at the University, of whom 61.6% are undergraduate, 21.6% postgraduate and 0.6% PhD; 95% of students are from Fiji.

The University of Fiji Act provides the University with a clear structure for its governance and management through Committees of Council and Senate and other Committees at the operational level. Academic and professional support staff, as well as students, are members of the Council, Senate and Committees. The Council of the University is the executive governing body. It is responsible for the management, administration and general control over the conduct of the University. The Council has powers to delegate its functions and responsibilities to sub-committees. The Senate is the academic authority of the University and is responsible to the Council for the teaching and learning, consultancy, research and other academic work.

The University's current Strategic Plan outlines the direction for the University during the period 2017-21, including eight strategic priorities: learning and teaching; student experience; research; environment and social responsibilities; infrastructure and systems; governance and financial sustainability; risk management; and accountability framework. This reflects the University's Vision and Mission as follows:

Vision:

- The University of Fiji will gain international recognition for academic excellence in its production of new knowledge and innovation through its transformative impact on society.

Mission:

- To provide lifelong learning opportunities to all through a student-friendly environment with creative thinking and innovative values to advance knowledge-based development.
- To offer quality, research-based, relevant, disciplinary, interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary learning and teaching to provide new knowledge and innovation in problem-solving.
- To create and advance public engagement with the local community, industry, governmental agencies, and international bodies for collaborative and partnership-type research projects and research-based education.
- To value academic freedom and foster UniFiji's role as a critic and conscience of society.
- To be a model employer, showing respect to staff and promoting their welfare and development.
- To strive for the best possible international governance practices to enhance transparency and accountability in policy formulation and implementation on academia, finance, human resources, information technology services, local and international student experience, and facilities.

In reaching conclusions about the extent to which The University of Fiji meets the 10 ESG standards, the QAA review team followed the evidence-based review procedure as outlined in the handbook for International Quality Review (June 2021). The QAA review team was provided with a self-evaluation and supporting evidence by the University. During the four-day online review visit, which took place 7-10 February 2022, the review team held a total of seven meetings with the Vice-Chancellor, senior management team, academic staff, professional support staff, students and alumni. The review team also had the opportunity to conduct a virtual observation of the University's online systems.

The review team came to the overall conclusion that The University of Fiji meets all 10 of the European Standards and Guidelines (2015), Part 1: Internal Quality Assurance, **subject to meeting a condition** in Standard 1.9 by the end of March 2023. The review team has identified three areas of good practice and 14 recommendations.

In February 2023, The University of Fiji submitted additional evidence with reference to actions taken to address the condition. After considering the additional evidence, the review team concluded that The University of Fiji has addressed the condition and thus it **meets** all 10 of the European Standards and Guidelines (2015), Part 1: Internal Quality Assurance.

QAA's conclusions about the University of Fiji

The QAA review team reached the following conclusions about the higher education provision at The University of Fiji.

European Standards and Guidelines

The University of Fiji meets nine of the 10 ESG Standards and Guidelines. The Standard not fully met is:

- ESG Standard 1.9: Ongoing monitoring and periodic review of programmes.

The University of Fiji therefore **meets** the requirements for International Quality Review **subject to meeting one condition** set out below.

Good practice

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

- The University engages with alumni and external industry stakeholders in the design of their awards and student experience. (ESG Standard 1.2)

- The University encourages innovation in teaching methods and the use of new technologies in teaching. (ESG Standard 1.5)

- The University develops proactive approach to providing a wide range of learning resource and student support, especially during the pandemic. (ESG Standard 1.6)

Conditions

The QAA review team identified the following **condition** that must be fulfilled before all of the European Standards and Guidelines can be deemed met at The University of Fiji. The condition must be addressed within 12 months.

- (ESG Standard 1.9) Build up a holistic and coherent framework of cyclical programme review, by:
1) developing a holistic and comprehensive programme monitoring and review policy and procedure
2) including a range of quantitative and qualitative measures and indicators in the policy and procedure based on international norms and institutional strategic need
3) establishing a review schedule such that all programmes are reviewed in full on at least a five-yearly basis, with periodic (for example, three-yearly) interim monitoring and reporting
4) developing clear responsibility for overseeing the monitoring and review policy and procedure with one body, and ensure the outcomes are reported to and discussed by the University Senate
5) ensuring students, external experts and stakeholders are formally involved in the monitoring and review procedures.

Following submission of an action plan and additional evidence by The University of Fiji on 20 February 2023, the review team concluded that the condition above had been fulfilled and that all ESG standards were therefore now **met**.

Recommendations

The QAA review team makes the following **recommendations** to The University of Fiji.

- Review the University's key quality assurance practices to ensure they include critical analysis and actions to drive continuous improvement. (ESG Standard 1.1)

- Take advantage of existing and readily-available resources to develop a more sophisticated understanding and approach to academic integrity. (ESG Standard 1.1)

- Continue its policy drive beyond the Fiji Higher Education Commission to achieve sustainable awards developed in-house to meet an international, as well as emergent, national economic market need. (ESG Standard 1.2)

- Establish an internal independent Moderation Policy and Practice for marking assessments to minimise the perceived risk of the University being accused of biased practices concerning student assessment and attainment. (ESG Standard 1.3)

- Thoroughly address the assessment practices around marking, moderation, use of academic external examiners, and other external reference to other higher education standards to align to international good practice in other higher education systems. (ESG Standard 1.3)

- Expedite senate approval of the Admissions and Grievance Appeals Policy. (ESG Standard 1.4)

- Develop effective monitoring arrangements to ensure that its published regulations for admissions are consistently applied in practice. (ESG Standard 1.4)

- Focus on staff continued professional development (CPD) to address the challenge of post-pandemic digital platform teaching, securing the highest quality staff, and potential for curriculum development. (ESG Standard 1.5)

- Adopt periodic in-class observations of teaching to all staff including short-term contract staff and part-time staff members engaged in student-facing activity. (ESG Standard 1.5)

- Adopt a more proactive approach to identifying additional student needs beyond existing processes for self-declaration. (ESG Standard 1.6)

- Develop student support on careers services to enhance student employability. (ESG Standard 1.6)

- Broaden the University's KPI on academic performance and outcomes, including success of particular student cohorts, progression and completion rates, graduate destinations, and student satisfaction, and any indicators relating to monitoring actions taken in response to academic performance and outcomes issues. (ESG Standard 1.7)

- Review the roles and responsibilities for information collection, analysis and dissemination to establish an integrated and strategic approach to meet its quality assurance needs going forward. (ESG Standard 1.7)

- Strengthen information about pass rates and graduate employment on its website for interested stakeholders. (ESG Standard 1.8)

Explanation of the findings about The University of Fiji

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.

Explanation of the findings about The University of Fiji

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   Under *The University of Fiji Act*, the University Council is the executive governing body of the University, with responsibility for management, administration and the conduct of the University. The Council has powers to delegate its functions and responsibilities to sub-committees and the Vice-Chancellor. As the highest academic authority of the University, the Senate is responsible to the Council for learning and teaching, research and other academic activities, and Senate Committees have delegated authority to manage quality assurance and standards.

1.2   The Act establishes national standards for different educational qualifications in Fiji, providing assurances that programmes developed meet these national standards. The Act also has review mechanisms to assist the University to comply with the standards. The University is regulated by the Fiji Higher Education Commission (FHEC), which involves institutional registration, recording of programmes on the Fiji Qualifications Framework (FQF), and regular, quarterly reporting on educational and financial performance. The University's policies and approach to quality assurance therefore need to align with the FHEC's requirements - the University's funding is dependent on meeting these requirements.

1.3   The University of Fiji Academic Quality Assurance Framework 2014 first established the University's approach to quality assurance. The documentation and approach were updated in 2017 and 2020, and now the Quality Assurance Handbook, November 2021 is the key document setting out the University's quality assurance approach. It sets out three cohorts of Committees: Council Committees, Senate Committees, and Joint Committees of Council & Senate; and two cohorts of policies and procedures - Policies & Procedures for Academic & Academic Related Staff; and Polices & Procedures for Support Staff. The University's submission to this review describes a suite of policies, procedures and practices to gather quality data and monitor its academic performance. The quality assurance framework was developed alongside and linked directly to the University's Strategic Plan, 2011-2014. To translate the Strategic Plan at the more operational level, faculties and business units develop sub-strategic plans.

1.4   The University's Quality Assurance Policy (QAP) is expressed in the Strategic Plan 2017-2021 as follows:

1.5   Tracking an excellent agenda, where quality and the pursuit of excellence is the trademark of a healthy organisational culture, and which would become implanted in our core values. We will pursue quality and excellence in these areas: learning and teaching; research; student experience; delivery of service; partnerships; the environment; and leadership and governance.

1.6   The Quality Assurance Handbook sets out, at a high level, provisions for programme development and review, internal review, external review, and accreditation.

1.7   There are Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for all quality assurance related operations. For example, the Quality Assurance Unit utilises SOPs on Teaching workload,

Student Evaluation Form, Online Learning and Teaching review, Quality Assurance and Course outlines.

1.8   The Quality Assurance Handbook also contains Standards and Guidelines for Internal Quality Assurance and for External Quality Assurance. These reference and draw from: the FHEC Policy and Guidelines on the External Evaluation and Review of higher education institutions including universities; the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESGs); and Policy and Guidelines on the External Evaluation and Review of higher education institutions by the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA).

1.9   The Handbook says that the University measures its performance by evaluation of academic performance and progression, graduate employability, and student and employer satisfaction, underpinned by rigorous programme development and review procedures, comprising a cohort of interrelated internal and external review processes. Thus the University maintains that it is constantly undergoing reviews at all levels for continuous improvement and monitoring by internal and external entities.

1.10   The review team evaluated the effectiveness of The University of Fiji's policy on quality assurance through discussions with faculty, staff and students during a virtual site visit, and by scrutinising a wide range of institutional policy and procedure documents, reports and records of meetings.

1.11   The team observed that the University's approach to and mechanisms for quality assurance had evolved since the institution's inception, and were continuing to evolve. Weaknesses were identified in the Strategic Plan 2017-2021, relating to an Underdeveloped Quality Assurance System and Inadequate Management Information System, and related KPIs were not achieved in the June 2021 Strategic Plan Status Report. Further, the guidelines for quality assurance in the 2021 Quality Assurance Handbook were very aspirational, and the document contained little information on how the aspirations would be achieved.

1.12   However, strategies such as recently establishing a fully operational Quality Assurance Unit (QAU) and the Centre for Academic Development, and strategic aims to further strengthen both of these, set out in the draft Strategic Plan 2022-2026, indicate the positive development of the University's quality assurance strategies and capacities. During discussions at the site visit, the team learned that the University was now taking a more systematic approach to quality assurance, where it was monitored at both administrative and academic levels, and senior management build up strategic plans in consideration of quality, and embed consideration of quality at different levels of the organisation.

1.13   As an example of how the quality framework is operationalised, the team saw two iterations of the School of Law Sub-Strategic Plan that showed how KPIs were monitored over time. The team also scrutinised a number of Standard Operating Procedures and a range of reports from internal and external quality processes, including Dean's reports. While these documents and practices showed the University was monitoring its performance, they did not demonstrate how the 'quality loop' was closed. For example, the School of Law Sub-Strategic Plan includes an assessment of performance, but does not outline what actions will be taken to improve performance going forward. The review team **recommends** that the University reviews its key quality assurance practices to ensure they include critical analysis and actions to drive continuous improvement.

1.14   The Academic Quality Assurance Framework sets out a comprehensive architecture for quality assurance at the University, spanning staffing, educational outcomes and research quality. Nonetheless, the University acknowledged that in its first years of operation it did not have the requisite systems to implement a robust quality assurance

framework, and was focused on the compliance aspects of the FHEC requirements. The team was told during the site visit that there is now top-to-bottom integration of quality assurance, with strong leadership and ownership across the University, and a commitment to 'go beyond' just compliance. This was borne out through discussions with staff at all levels, who demonstrated a widespread understanding of their respective roles in the quality assurance framework and approach.

1.15   The team saw ample evidence of student participation in quality assurance. The Student Submission to the review sets out how The University of Fiji Student Association (UFSA) is established under the University's Act: a) provide a support network for students; b) be the voice of students at all levels; and c) provide services to improve the quality of student life. As such, there is student representation on various university sub-committees which are given specific responsibility for overseeing improvements to the University. The Students' Association President is also a member of the Senate. The UFSA is instrumental in implementing a student evaluation process (SEP), conducted at the conclusion of each semester. Discussions with students confirmed this active and effective participation.

1.16   The University has a number of mechanisms to involve external stakeholders in its quality assurance processes. Under FHEC requirements and the University's own programme development procedures, each programme must show evidence from three external stakeholders of a need for the programme in fulfilling local and regional skills or professional needs in the professional or industry world. The team observed that the University has strong links with local professional bodies in health, nursing, law, and business and accounting.

1.17   The review team saw policies and procedures relating to plagiarism and dishonest practice, and noted the use of plagiarism software. Site visit discussions confirmed that academic staff and students alike understood about cheating and plagiarism. However, broader understanding of academic misconduct and strategies to ensure academic integrity were not apparent. There are ample good practice guides, tools and insights, and extensive academic integrity networks the University could access. The review team **recommends** that the University take advantage of these resources to develop a more sophisticated understanding and approach to academic integrity.

1.18   The University of Fiji has quality assurance policies that take account of both the national and international context in which the institution operates. The quality assurance system is underpinned by policies and procedures, and while there have been historical weaknesses, there is evidence the system is moving from aspirational to operational. Departments, faculties and other organisational units, institutional leadership, staff and students understand and take on their responsibilities in quality assurance and there is evidence of good involvement of external stakeholders in quality assurance. The review team concludes that Standard 1.1: Policy of quality assurance is **met**.

Standard 1.2   Design and approval of programmes

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

Findings

2.1   The University identifies study programmes designed with overall programme objectives that align with the institutional strategy and have explicit intended learning outcomes processes. The University identifies it possesses clearly-defined processes, roles and responsibilities for programme and criteria against which programme proposals are assessed with relevant use of reference points and external expertise in programme design and approval.

2.2   The University identifies stringent policies and procedures for the development and approval of new programmes with a governance structure established at School level, with central budget planning and external engagement. An initial proposal approval at the relevant Board of Studies, sees a new award progress to the Academic Programme Committee, the Senate, the Council, and then outside the University - to the FHEC and the Fiji Qualification Framework.

2.3   The University describes the design of awards meeting industry needs, and those of other national stakeholders, particularly the FHEC. The University's Academic Programme Development Committee, which oversees the quality assurance process, considers the programme proposal. The proposal is signed off by the Vice-Chancellor and submitted to the FHEC and Fiji Framework Committee for approval.

2.4   The University's Academic Programme Development Committee (APDC) is responsible for the ongoing quality assurance process, overseeing programme planning and design, and sustainable requirements and structures. University development of awards through its internal governance, runs simultaneously with consultations with Tertiary Scholarships and Loans Services for identification of 'national priority areas'. The University operates in close collaboration with the FHEC, which maintains significant steer on the development of programmes that can inhibit the University's ambitions. Working with the FHEC ensures a low-risk approach to course development and delivery. Nonetheless, the process of programme development maintains a focus on employment outcomes, course enhancement and adherence to University strategy.

2.5   The University has not had any proposed programme of study rejected by the FHEC but the national government is very employment-oriented and programmes aim to meet this need. The journalism award, identified as an exemplar was developed with the support of the Fiji journalism industry, but still required FHEC support. The Bachelor of Agricultural Engineering programme proposal was discussed at the APDC and returned to the School of Science and Technology for amendments and clarification through correspondence and alignment to the Programme Guide. The University's senior management is aware of the need to serve the national and international markets, and this is effectively reflected in the curriculum of awards.

2.6   Student involvement in the design of awards, award review, or changes in modes of teaching, is facilitated through The University of Fiji Student Association (UFSA) which is

represented in the Senate, that provides final endorsement and approval of new programmes. The national association also contributes in deliberation of programmes that are of financial interest to the University. There is evidence that student views were taken into consideration for the new Bachelor's programme in Journalism and Media studies. Similarly, Senate meeting minutes records the President of the UFSA attending the meeting and contributing to the proposal for the Bachelor's degree in Medical Sciences.

2.7   The University's awards have been designed to reflect the four purposes of higher education of the Council of Europe. Each award, and its courses, possess identified and explicit learning outcomes and assessments in a consistent structure through templates and information guides. The design of the academic outcomes and learner experience involves students and external stakeholders, and the national government maintains oversight of employment of graduates both in-country and abroad. Awards include appropriate placement opportunities and connection to supporting industries, that underpin the study at the University.

2.8   Awards are designed to deliver programme objectives that include skills development and experience that aim to enhance learning beyond simple course outlines and the Quality Assurance Framework. The University identifies a variety of enhancement activities, including its Drua Climate Change Research Project, Inter-varsity Moot Competition, and coffee shop public speaking.

2.9   The evaluation of programme design and approval appears to be a detailed process in which the APDC acts as a Checklist Committee to ensure all relevant documents are met. The APDC's feedback is provided to the Schools for review or amendment before the Senate considers the new programme for approval.

2.10   The University has clear stages for approval of awards to ensure all programme logistics are initially achieved, in addition to School readiness, programme documentation, and checklist tracking which meets Fiji higher education requirements. FHEC requirements at school level mean that the design of all requirements are met at conception stage.

2.11   The review team found that the University's programmes are developed with external stakeholder engagement, academic adherence to the FHEC and subject-based knowledge and skills, which is an appropriate approach to minimising risk to the University. There is an emphasis on enhancement and personal development integrated into the learner experience, and support for career development integrated into awards' design. The review team identifies the University's engagement with alumni and external industry stakeholders in the design of their awards and student experience as **good practice**. The review team identified the personal appraisal of a student's skill set and experience ready for work, along with work-based learning opportunities, and the network connection with alumni is beyond the expected baseline and an outstanding initiative. The review team would encourage the University to continue to develop this as the students clearly identify the opportunities this offers as a highlight of their learning experience and a positive reason to study at the University.

2.12   Student progression is achieved through internal quality assurance, School Boards of Studies and oversight of student data, including attainment and employment outcomes. These data are reported to Senate - the University's highest governance committee, with action planning to maintain strategic standards.

2.13   The review team found that the University's awards are at the core of the University's teaching mission, led by the senior management and understood by academic and support staff, and students. The University works closely with the FHEC to develop the University's portfolio, with strong guidance on employment outcomes and contribution to the national economy. The review team found that the University's alignment with FHEC

guidance leads to minimal risk to the design and approval of academic programmes, given the successful track record of approval and validation achieved from the FHEC. Meanwhile, the review team recognised that developing an award portfolio so closely aligned to the national economy needs might be a limiting factor on the academic faculty of the University, with potential restrictions in the ability to achieve internationalisation and attract additional international students. While the review team has identified some of the University's innovation and determination to develop the portfolio within this limited framework, the review team **recommends** that the University continues its policy drive beyond the FHEC to achieve sustainable awards developed in-house to meet an international, as well as emergent national economic market need.

2.14   The review team endorses the University for continuing with the internationalisation of the curriculum to prepare graduates for a global economy, supporting alumni in their careers. The review team encourages the University to continue to look beyond the compliance framework and embed continuous improvement working in conjunction with the student community to support students' academic and professional development.

2.15   Progression of students is structured through internal quality assurance policies and processes, review of academic mechanisms, learner support and the University's performance reported through formal reporting. The review team found this process effective, self-critical and consistent, and minimises the risk to the reputation of the University, as the University's focus on student success is demonstrated in their data.

2.16   All awards are designed with overall programme objectives aligned to the institutional and national government strategy, and have identified and explicit learning outcomes. The design of the academic outcomes and learner experience involves students and external stakeholders, and the national government maintains oversight of employment of graduates both in-country and abroad. Awards all include appropriate placement opportunities and connection to supporting industries, that underpin the study at the University. The review team therefore concludes that Standard 1.2: Design and approval of programmes is **met**.

Standard 1.3   Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment

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

Findings

3.1   The University identifies a philosophy that its learning and teaching activities and associated resources provide every student with an equal and effective opportunity to achieve the intended learning outcomes. The University distinguishes between pedagogy and heutagogy, appreciating that teaching approaches adapt to the subject, and the learning outcomes to be achieved. Therefore, the design and delivery of study programmes, and assessment of their outcomes, is understood by all staff and students.

3.2   The University has committed itself to providing suitable learning, teaching and assessment functions, where feedback is consistently provided to students, enabling them to monitor their own progress and improve their own performance and academic development.

3.3   The University expects all students to achieve their potential, and mechanisms are in place to support those identified through Academic Advisor guidance, Student Academic Services and by University Counselling Services. The University's Academic Regulations relating to learning and teaching ensure that students receive consistently equitable assistance while programmes remain sustainable and meet the highest academic standards.

3.4   The Academic Regulations provide a framework of rules related to university learning and teaching, approved by Senate and administered by the Office of the Registrar, that govern how students are to be considered for progression or for awards at the University. These Regulations ensure the adoption of best practices during examinations and the principles and processes of assessments so that no student is discriminated against.

3.5   The Office of the Registrar is by law and policy the custodian of the Student Regulations which includes Assessment Regulations and responsibility for the following administration and management of the operations of all aspects of a student's admission, progression and completion. The Office is primarily responsible for maintaining accurate records and ensuring compliance with the Assessment Regulations. It plays a strategic part in institutional efforts to record and keep students' assessment, graduation details and overall progress of the student. Therefore, the Office of the Registrar is key to overseeing programme delivery in a way that encourages students to take an active role in creating the learning process.

3.6   The Office of the Registrar operates a suite of Standard Operating Procedures that ensure quality assurance benchmarking in academic progress. These include: Aegrotat Pass; Application of Completion of Programme Form Non-Ceremonial; Application for Completion of Programme; Application for Cross-Credit; Compassionate Pass; Course Result Record; Examination Result; Moderation of Examination Paper; Printing of Academic Transcript; Printing of Graduation Certificate; Receiving and Dispatching Final Exam Answer Scripts; Reconsideration of Course Grade Policy; Reprint of Graduation Certificate; Restricted Pass; Special Exam; Supplementary Assessment.

3.7   The Office of the Registrar is the locus of all official student academic records and is responsible for the accuracy, integrity and security of student data. This ensures accurate assessment procedures are followed and that academic staff maintain accurate records including programme changes - for example, any alterations to majors/minors, marking policy, moderation data, grades assessment and GPA calculation, award transfer and

cross-credit for academic work completed at other universities, and all other student related information.

3.8   The University's awards are designed to deliver programme objectives that include skills development and experience that aim to enhance learning beyond simple course outlines and the Quality Assurance Framework. The University demonstrates a flexibility in award design allowing an architecture that attends to the diversity of students, enabling flexible learning paths and using a variety of pedagogical methods. The University evaluates and adjusts the modes of delivery and pedagogic methods, basis of each award and its courses, on identified and explicit learning outcomes and assessments in a consistent structure through templates and information guides. The Vice-Chancellor and Deans annually review the effectiveness of assessments as a measure of the extent to which students achieve learning outcomes, and assess student feedback on course design.

3.9   The design of the academic outcomes and learner experience involves students and external stakeholders, and the national government maintains oversight of employment of graduates both in-country and abroad. Awards all include appropriate placement opportunities and connection to supporting industries underpin the study at the University. Consequently, the course outline articulated in the Course Handbook effectively acts as the contract between the University and student. The courses are well received by students, who express confidence in the quality of teaching materials and learning support available.

3.10   Student involvement in the design of awards is facilitated through the UFSA, represented in the Senate, which provides final endorsement and approval of new programmes. There is evidence that student views were taken into consideration for the new Bachelor's programme in Journalism and Media Studies. Similarly, Senate meeting minutes record the President of the UFSA attending the meeting and contributing to the proposal for the Bachelor's degree in Medical and Health Sciences.

3.11   The University has an academic advisory system to support students with an aim to improve retention, progression and attainment of graduates. Individual Academic Advisors report monthly the monitoring progress of students to senior management. Academic Advisors assist students working towards careers suiting individual ability, monitor progress and support performance, and liaise with the University to ensure student retention and attainment, with a focus on career guidance particularly from Level 5. Students recognise that support ranges across more than simply academic support and assistance in study skills, and is simply accessed through Moodle in addition to in-person.

3.12   The University ensures student achievement is proactively managed, and Academic Advisors monitor GPA performance and warn individuals if their performance is below threshold. Where there is continued poor performance, students may receive counselling and support, but also a warning, suspension or rejection in the most persistent of cases. The success of the Academic Advisors has seen a year-on-year improvement of 15% in student retention and progression, and improved attainment from 63% to 75%.

3.13   Where a student experiences personal challenges that prevent submission of work, poor performance or non-attendance, they may formally apply to the Registrar for consideration of an Aegrotat Pass, Compassionate Pass, or a special examination. This appeal-led approach is guided by Academic Advisors in close liaison with students.

3.14   The University has adopted standard assessment criteria of assignments for internal assessments, and examinations where appropriate, according to the Schools' preferences. Examinations are moderated through Standard Operating Procedures. Assessments are designed to enable students to demonstrate achievement of the learning outcomes, but an assessment component may carry one or more learning outcomes.

3.15   The University uses standardised assessment criteria and grading for all summative work. Students are informed of the assessment criteria at the beginning of the semester through a clear matrix in the Course Outlines. The University has also evidenced samples of assignment descriptions in Biology and Physics that address literature reviews, presentations and projects. The University describes how grades are based on performance in coursework and examinations, or coursework only without any final exam, and vice versa. The assessment grading systems and the approach to assessment are provided in The University of Fiji Handbook 2021. The grading approach is reflected in Course Outlines and course rubrics. The University approaches assessment through a standardised approach to seminar presentations, postgraduate research papers, presentations and coursework and final examination regulations. Students are introduced to model answers and what may constitute an A grade, B grade and so on; students are also introduced to marking metrics and criteria against which marks are awarded. Students report that how to pass modules is clear.

3.16   The University's Course Coordinators are expected to produce course assessment and examination papers, course outlines, detailed answers for the questions, and detailed marking schemes, which are moderated by the Deans/Directors. All examination papers and result submissions are moderated to eliminate errors and ensure accurate information is relayed to the students.

3.17   The University submitted a range of samples of report writing rubrics for staff and students; assignment marking rubrics for staff and students; and an oral presentation guide which encourages students to take an active role in creating the learning process, and that the assessment of students reflects this approach. Academic staff responsible for assessing student work are expected to abide by the Assessment Regulation and Standard Operating Procedures and are informed by reflection, consideration of professional practice, and subject-specific scholarship.

3.18   However, assessments are not second-marked or moderated, before being presented to the Board of Studies for confirmation, and then presented to the Senate. Double-marking is only conducted in borderline cases - that is a fail within 2% - or where there has been a student complaint about performance. The University described that there is a limit to subject specialism in staffing that precludes such an approach. Although in the meeting with the review team, students expressed confidence in the consistency of marking, the review team still strongly **recommends** the University to establish an internal independent Moderation Policy and Practice for marking assessments to minimise the perceived risk of the University being accused of biased practices concerning student assessment and attainment. The review team identifies that the overview of examination assessments' academic suitability by Deans of School aligns to the European Standards and Guidelines, but this should be expanded to all assessment types for internal approval. The marking of assessments by individual tutors should be moderated before being presented to the Board of Studies - either by sample or a proportionate scale of another academic member of staff to ensure the consistency and fairness of markings.

3.19   The University provides students with detailed and focused feedback to enable them to monitor their individual progress and further their academic development. Feedback is supplied either in written form for all written assessments or verbally for seminar presentations, supplementing the mark awarded. Immediate feedback, via the TopHat software, has also been offered in the last academic year, via Lecture Chats that students and lecturers used concurrently during live streaming of lectures and tutorials. Students confirmed that they received structured feedback of assessed work.

3.20   Students utilise Turnitin to demonstrate academic integrity and originality, and no unintentional plagiarism. The University operates an academic misconduct process, which is

reported by the Course Coordinator to the Dean. The penalties for proven cases vary from a written reprimand to the cancellation of any previously credited pass in a course associated with the offence. Significant or repeat offences may range from a fine to expulsion from the University and are reported at Senate.

3.21   The review team finds the University operates a formal appeal process, which students recognise may be used to contest academic decisions - that is, assessment of work, individually or collectively. The University operates an appeals process for academic outcomes. The Office of the Registrar allows students formally to apply for reconsideration of grades if they have failed in their final examination. A Standard Operating Procedure for Reconsideration of Grade is available for all students. The University has provided evidence as the Application Form used for reconsideration of course grades; an example of application approved for course reconsideration; and an example of an unsuccessful application. Students confirmed they understand the procedure for reconsideration of grade which will be dealt with by the Dean of School, they also stated that they can approach a lecturer for further explanation if not satisfied with marks received.

3.22   The University has a Student Grievance Procedure that provides the guiding principles for resolving student grievances and appealing decisions about grievances. Any student with a grievance against (i) a fellow-student; (ii) an academic staff member; (iii) professional related and support staff member; or (iv) any matter within the University other than that relating to students and staff of the University, has available for relief the respective channels of redress laid out under the Regulations governing Student Grievance Procedures. In exceptional circumstances, grievances against professional or professional related staff may be referred to the Vice-Chancellor for urgent consideration. The Grievance Procedure is contiguous to the appeal procedure that protects a student's experience, and is understood by the student community.

3.23   The review team found that the University gives careful consideration to the design and delivery of the study of programmes, and the assessment of outcomes. The University's academic regulations, overseen by the Office of the Registrar, provides a framework which ensures consistent quality assurance and student records within a governance structure. The University's Academic Programme Committee oversees development of the curriculum and portfolio, and the review team saw evidence of the inclusion of students and external stakeholders in development, and a focus on the eventual employment outcomes and learning enhancement as part of the design. The review team saw a flexibility in assessment types, learning opportunities and pedagogic methods that were sensitive to student feedback, and where students are represented at all levels of committee governance.

3.24   The review team found that the design of academic outcomes and learner experiences are appropriately described in Course Handbooks, which consistently promoted academic regulations, enhanced learning opportunities, pastoral support, and guidance for complaints and appeals. The review team saw the course information is supported by a quality virtual learning environment, which offers supplementary learning experiences and materials. Students report trust and reliance on the University's learning facilities, and confidence in the engagement of academic and pastoral staff focused on their successful learning. The review team also saw that student learning is underpinned by academic advisory support, affords personal careers advice, and monitoring of academic performance. The proactive focus on student attainment is proving successful.

3.25   A couple of the University's practices regarding assessment are not in line with the European Standards and Guidelines. For example, the awarding of up to 15% of module grades for attendance and participation in class is not recognised in the European Standards and Guidelines. In addition, as mentioned above, assessments are not second-marked or moderated. Course tutors individually mark student work and then grades are presented to

the Board of Studies, which lacks arrangements to ensure assessment practice is transparent, consistent and fair. Finally, assessment design and delivery, including markings, should be reviewed by academic external examiners to confirm that assessment practices are consistent, transparent and fairly applied, and that academic standards are equivalent to other universities elsewhere in the specialist subject areas. The review team therefore **recommends** that the University thoroughly addresses the assessment practices around marking, moderation, use of academic external examiners, and other external reference to other higher education standards to align to international good practice in other higher education systems.

3.26   The review team examined the University's approach to student-centred learning teaching and assessment, and investigated the learning opportunities of the diversity of students and their needs to enable flexible learning paths. The review team found that the University has a clear philosophy towards pedagogy that is understood throughout the University and reflected in the leadership, policies and practice. The review team therefore considers that Standard 1.3: Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment is **met.**

Standard 1.4   Student admission, progression, recognition and certification

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

Findings

4.1   The Office of the Registrar (OREG) is responsible for oversight of admissions, progression, recognition and certification. Schools have delegated authority to set their own admissions criteria, which are ultimately approved by Senate. Requirements, in particular concerning prior academic achievement, vary between Schools. The University has detailed operating procedures in place for admitting all students, including at undergraduate and postgraduate level, and for local and international applicants. Application forms are readily accessible on the University website. The forms are comprehensive and require a broad range of appropriate information to be supplied by applicants, including on prior academic qualifications, disability and demographic data. Completed forms are submitted to Student Academic Services for processing; the Data Analyst Assistant assesses the forms and acknowledges the application, before the relevant School or Centre uses a matrix to form a decision and recommendation about admission. The University interviews applicants and has a standard template in order to carry out this task consistently and fairly. Depending on the level of the application the process varies slightly - for instance, the Postgraduate Committee approves postgraduate applications; whereas, the Head of Department approves applications for undergraduate provision.

4.2   The University welcomes applications from students who do not meet standard entry requirements. These arrangements are set out in its Admission Criteria for Mature Entry. Applicants may be admitted through this route if they are over 21 years of age and the Dean/Director or representative determines they will likely complete the programme based on their academic background and work experience. Senate or the Dean/Director may also require applicants to pass courses on a case-by-case basis. Recognition of prior learning is referenced in the University's Academic Regulations; however, the University stated that it is currently developing a Recognition of Prior Learning Policy, although this was not complete at the time of the review visit.

4.3   The University moved to an online enrolment process in the second semester of 2021, which the University claimed was successful overall but with 'a few teething problems'. The Registrar's office is responsible for organising student orientation. A comprehensive 'orientation package' is available online and includes a welcome from the Vice-Chancellor, guides about online systems and the virtual learning environment, academic policies and regulations, fees, library and support services.

4.4   At the start of the review, the University acknowledged that it needs to develop procedures for handling complaints and appeals about recruitment and admission, as these are currently only in place for assessment. However, during the review process, the University provided the review team with a draft Admissions and Grievance Appeals Policy. The Policy states that grievances or appeals relating to admissions decisions should be sent to the Registrar. The Registrar will assess the application again and, where an offer cannot be made, it will then be considered by the School Dean/Centre Director who will make a recommendation to Senate.

4.5   Student performance is monitored through the Unsatisfactory Progress Regulation where low performing students are informed in time, and guided by Student Academic Services, Academic Advisors and the University Counsellor. The University informed the

team that academic advisors play a central role in providing guidance and support to students and helping them monitor their progress.

4.6   Students are able to view their results online and request their transcript. However, the transcript has to be processed manually due to funding constraints. The University also produces reports on the satisfactory progress of students. The University provided the team with examples of certificates and transcripts provided to students, which clearly contains information about the awarding body, award, courses undertaken, grades and overall GPA.

4.7   The University has a Student Recruitment Committee which is responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of the University's arrangements. Specific responsibilities include establishing and monitoring recruitment targets, communicating and implementing the University's recruitment and admissions strategies, and reviewing relevant policies. To assist with these tasks, the University informed the team that it produces trend data on progression, attrition and achievement but the review team struggled to identify the attrition and progression from the spreadsheets provided.

4.8   The University has detailed and extensive policies and processes in place in relation to progression, recognition and certification. These are implemented consistently, appropriately and in accordance with university regulations. With respect to admissions, the team found that some minor policy gaps exist - for example, surrounding the development of an explicit Recognition of Prior Learning Policy and a policy covering admissions complaints and appeals. However, the University has made progress on the latter and the draft Admissions and Grievance Appeals Policy will shortly be considered for approval by Senate. The team therefore **recommends** that approval of the Admissions and Grievance Appeals Policy is expedited.

4.9   The review team found variability in the implementation of the University's admissions policy. In practice, the University operates a condensed admissions process, with students invited to present their application documents, attend an interview and enrol on the same day. The University informed the team that they are not selective and that providing students meet the basic entry requirements they will not routinely be required to sit an interview. Some exceptions exist - for example, MBA applicants and those applying for medical programmes. The team confirmed that postgraduate applications are approved by the Postgraduate Committee, who also take prior experiential learning into account. Despite being formally constituted in September 2015, the Student Recruitment Committee does not meet in practice and the membership and frequency of meetings have yet to be agreed. The University informed the team that the need for this committee had been called into question because of the open approach to recruitment and would be reflected upon as part of an upcoming strategic review.

4.10   Students reported high levels of satisfaction with enrolment. Where students applying for recognition of prior learning are deemed to have insufficient experience, they are admitted onto the Foundation programme. The University did inform the team about some initial challenges with online enrolment, whereby students were permitted to register for multiple courses, providing duplicate records on the system. These issues have now been resolved. Students also reported high levels of satisfaction with student orientation. The induction schedule contains information about important dates, the student guide to TopHat, regulations, IT services, handbook, fees structure and library information and regulations.

4.11   The University's challenges concerning the collation and use of management information and data discussed under Standard 1.7 are also relevant under this Standard, including difficulties the University faces in its timeliness of responding to data requests and the need to integrate information systems. As noted in Standard 1.7, the University needs to

make better use of data relating to progression, completion and graduate destinations. The team considered that the fact the Student Recruitment Committee was in abeyance may have impinged on the University's opportunities to review the effectiveness of its approach. Whether through the Student Recruitment Committee or another monitoring vehicle, the review team therefore **recommends** the University to develop effective monitoring arrangements to ensure that its published regulations for admissions are consistently applied in practice.

4.12   The team found evidence that OREG provides reports to Senate on graduation and student certification. Senate approved new certificate and transcript templates in March 2021. These include appropriate information concerning the awarding body, award, courses undertaken, grades and overall GPA.

4.13   Notwithstanding minor gaps in policy, limitations in the University's use of relevant management information and incomplete monitoring arrangements, the team found that staff understand their responsibilities for admission, progression, recognition and certification. Students confirmed to the team that they also understand the relevant policies and processes and that they are satisfied with their implementation. Therefore, the review team concludes that Standard 1.4: Student admission, progression, recognition and certification is **met**.

Standard 1.5   Teaching staff

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

Findings

5.1   The University has an extensive policy concerning the recruitment of suitably qualified staff. This policy identifies that all substantive posts must be approved by University Council, and that the Vice-Chancellor must approve adjunct academic posts, and may appoint 12-month interim roles to meet university need. The policy articulates a structured, consistent and transparent approach to appointment of staff.

5.2   The recruitment policy identifies the reporting through an Appointment Committee for academic staff members, comprised of the Vice-Chancellor, Pro-Chancellor, Registrar and senior management. In addition, it identifies how senior staff are appointed to the University. Recruitment policies ensure compliance with equality, diversity and inclusion. Appointments are conducted through committee and overseen by senior leadership. The University submits to external audit to monitor the adequacy of appointment procedures, and the scrutiny of international academics by the Department of Immigration.

5.3   All academic appointments have to meet Minimum Standards of Academic Levels Policy and part-time staff are appointed under the same learning and teaching terms as full-time staff. Following budget approval, any School is then able to engage in the normal process of recruitment.

5.4   The recruitment process is standardised through a model interview process for academic staff and evidence was seen of appointment of academic staff, reported to the Appointments Committee which demonstrated a consistent approach to candidates.

5.5   The policy is to promote the development of staff, and policy to assess the competence of teachers. The University identifies a commitment to recruitment of suitably qualified staff through consistent recruitment procedures, staff development and progression, and minimal academic levels of appointment.

5.6   The University follows its published Staff Recruitment Policy, and recruitment is a rigorous process following HR policies and externally audited to ensure compliance. Examples of staff recruitment and appointment record have been evidenced, including staff application form, interview record, panel discussion and decision record. The University has also evidenced the standard Interview Record Panel Discussion; Job Advertisement; and, New Employee Information Form.

5.7   The University calculates adequate staffing based on student recruitment and government funding grant, which is agreed through the University Budget Committee, Finance Committee and Council. The University is presently staffed appropriately for current programmes and student population but future recruitment will aim to attract staff who are qualified in wider fields than single subjects, have researched internationally, and with experience to contribute positively to learning and teaching.

5.8   The quality of teaching is overseen by both a Quality System Procedure and Quality Assurance Process that seeks to encourage scholarly activity to strengthen the link between education and research, and encourage innovation in teaching methods and the use of new technologies.

5.9   In class, the Deans oversee and review classroom teaching recorded on a report template that identifies required standards, but the review team found that Deans do not receive training in the observation of teaching practice and learning quality to be reported in a structured and formulaic, criteria-based approach. This process is an annual and compulsory task in discussion with staff members with cross-referencing to student feedback. If skills gaps are identified through this process, the University supports development in-house where possible, but using external training if necessary. The consequence is that academic staff are committed to the University and able to progress their careers.

5.10   Staff development is supported through participation in local and international conferences, and supported with training and workshops to enhance skills. The University further evidences conference leave for staff, approved part-time studies for staff and conference reports for conferences internally and internationally. The review team heard how all academic staff must be qualified to a minimum master's level, which the University sponsors in Schools to upskill staff qualifications. However, the review team could not find evidence of structured CPD based on annual appraisal, in-class observation or staff interview.

5.11   The quality of online delivery is additionally overseen by Online Learning and Teaching Review Criteria overseen by departmental senior management. The University has addressed the challenge of online learning effecting change through Internal Meeting Minutes 2018 and a revised programme guide for the INRD Programme. Similarly, the School of Science and Technology (SOST) Action Plan discusses staffing, programmes, infrastructure and equipment for the Department of Science, and the actions taken.

5.12   The shift in the University's policy from teaching and learning to promote research and publications reflects the changing environment of global higher education expectations. Teaching staff are contractually obligated to conduct research into global issues, and support national economic development. Research output is evidenced across the University and is linked to teaching to strengthen focus on learning outcomes required of student-centred learning and teaching. Staff contracts now emphasise research.

5.13   The University seeks to ensure that teaching and learning regulations are effective for improving the standard of learning and teaching. The University utilises the TopHat virtual learning environment (VLE), that staff are required to use to add value to learning and teaching. The University has also adopted Science Online 'Beyond Labz' to support science courses taught online through the VLE. These developments are part of staff induction and six-month probation, to ensure expected standards, led by the Deans of School.

5.14   All full-time teaching staff are reviewed through a Staff Annual Performance Review Policy which reviews performance in teaching, research, administration and level of community engagement. Heads of Department, Deans and the Staff Review Committee (that is, the Joint Council and Senate Committee) make the decision on the outcome of the Performance Review. Staff members considered underperforming are notified by HR and response monitored by Deans' Peer Review.

5.15   Following the Staff Review Committee meeting and Student Evaluation Forms, the University issues letters of encouragement to staff where it has been possible to identify improvements for staff in relation to learning and teaching.

5.16   The University approach is to ensure the teacher's role supports a high-quality student experience through the standardised recruitment processes to appoint appropriately qualified staff. Through induction, the review team found that staff are supported in the acquisition of knowledge, pedagogic competences and practical skills that support effective teaching methods and VLE operation. This investment in staff ensures the mitigation of risk

that appointments would not be effective and adversely affect the student experience. Students appreciate the knowledge, experience and skills of the teaching staff, and the review team found that the student community know where to access support from non-academic staff, express trust in the quality of their academic experiences, and demonstrate a confidence in the annual monitoring and feedback mechanisms.

5.17   The University demonstrates that it understands its responsibility for the quality of its staff and for providing them with a supportive environment that allows them to carry out their work effectively. The review team has seen that the University follows clear, transparent and fair processes for staff recruitment and conditions of employment that recognise the importance of teaching. More recently, the University has offered opportunities for, and promotes, the professional development of teaching staff; encourages scholarly activity, strengthening the link between education and research; and has actively promoted both innovation in teaching methods and the use of new technologies. The review team identifies the University encouraging innovation in teaching methods and the use of new technologies in teaching as **good practice**, given the quality of the VLE and learning materials demonstrated. The review team considered the online materials of the highest standards and the integration of lecture and supplementary learning materials very good. The review team would be keen to see best practice in the development of the VLE translated across the institution to an agreed standard, which would be achieved through staff training to exploit fully the potential of the VLE platform for all awards. The review team therefore **recommends** the University to focus on staff development, especially continued professional development (CPD) to address the challenge of post-pandemic digital platform teaching, securing the highest quality staff, and potential for curriculum development.

5.18   The University has a structured approach to identify new staff developmental needs through in-class observations and annual appraisal which takes student feedback into consideration. The review team agrees this is an effective approach to minimise the risks to the University of a shortage of qualified staff. The review team **recommends** the University to adopt periodic in-class observations of teaching to all staff including short-term contract staff and part-time staff members engaged in student-facing activity.

5.19   The University of Fiji has developed required policies and processes for staff to enable a supportive environment that allows them to carry out their work effectively. The process of staff recruitment is clear. There is evidence of opportunities for staff professional development and training. Processes for staff evaluation and promotion are in place. Consequently, the review team concludes that the 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's Strategic Plan 2017-2021 included an aim to 'support the academic, professional and personal success of students, educate students to advocate for themselves and others, and engage students in transformative co-curricular experiences to develop them into effective leaders and global citizens'. Beneath this high-level objective, the plan contained a series of objectives and strategies including, making support and pastoral care that is sensitive to diverse cultures available, provide standard professional support for students with disabilities and poor mental health, and emphasising the employability of students. The Plan also included a focus on presenting students with programmes to improve their employability, supporting students with English language, writing and numeracy skills and ensuring suitable ICT provision was available. The Office of the Registrar (OREG) is central to providing oversight for the strategy and is responsible for counselling and general welfare services.

6.2   The University makes a wide range of learning resources and support services available to its students. These include counselling services to staff, students and visitors. A standard operating procedure is in place and the Counsellor provides training to staff to help ensure that they have the skills and knowledge to support students. The Counsellor also produces reports on the service. The University introduced virtual counselling and consultation services during the pandemic. This was in recognition of increased isolation and stress in relation to the virus circulation, and to ensure students were able to learn despite the challenges associated with COVID-19. The service was available to students 24/7 and the University also appointed a female psychologist to assist students with issues of domestic abuse.

6.3   Students deemed to be finding challenges with learning and coping with studies, are allocated an Academic Advisor who provides support and guidance. Advisors form a critical part of the University's support infrastructure. Their role is to assist students by helping identify suitable elective courses, aiding the student to reflect on their strengths, weaknesses and career aspirations, addressing underachievement and poor attendance, providing guidance over policies and procedures, and assisting with pastoral requirements. Students are responsible for scheduling regular appointments with their advisors.

6.4   The University also employs a nurse who provides a range of healthcare services for students and a standard operating procedure is in place to guide their approach to work. The nurse provides a series of brief summary reports about their activities to inform university committees. These reports provide an overview of the number of students seen as patients and a breakdown of the type of illness and injuries that were treated.

6.5   Despite constrained resource, the University also has a range of financial support measures available for students. These include a 10% fee reduction for all first-year students in 2021, a 10% reduction for all programmes in 2022 and a waiver on late enrolment fees.

6.6   The library provides a wide range of resources and support. Students and staff have access to a wide range of electronic resources including ProQuest Central, LexisNexis, JSTOR and others. The library currently holds over 40,000 titles. The University also holds several nationally significant and historical collections. The library has operated a 24/7 support service during the pandemic. Other initiatives adopted during this period have

included scanning relevant chapters from prescribed texts, training for students on online research, additional materials and readings loaded onto the TopHat system. The library employs six full-time staff and a dedicated law librarian. The library on the Saweni Campus also houses a computer lab with over 100 machines. It can hold 62 students at capacity and has a series of small discussion rooms. At the Samabula campus, the library has a capacity of 20 students.

6.7   A range of policies are in place detailing expected standards of behaviour and what students can expect from the University. These include Regulations for Student Conduct and Discipline, a Student Grievance Policy and Unsatisfactory Progress Regulations. The policy on ICT Internet Access also outlines acceptable behaviour and security measures in place across the University.

6.8   The University informed the review team that its recruitment procedures help to ensure that it recruits high-quality staff. There is a basic job description template in place and the University has overview data about staff qualifications. Samples of staff CVs also demonstrate that staff have international profiles and are research active.

6.9   The University assumed an effective and proactive response to the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition to the changes to counselling services, the University tracked issues presented to support services during the pandemic and provided suitable targeted interventions - for instance, stress management seminars. The University also opened a series of ICT Centres throughout the main island to assist students with online teaching and learning. This was in recognition of the technological and connectivity issues facing students and enabled them to participate effectively in online lectures and tutorials. Students informed the team that these centres had been critical to their ongoing progression and achievement. During the second lockdown, in April 2021, the University launched an internet radio station to help keep the University 'socially connected, entertained, informed and educated'.

6.10   Students also reported high levels of satisfaction to the team regarding library resources. In addition to being able to access the materials they require, students also informed the team about high levels of service. For example, where students were ill or isolating during the pandemic, their lecturers had personally delivered library texts and other materials to their home address. Students also praised other resources, such as the virtual labs, which the team also identified as providing a high-quality interactive experience for students. Overall the team concluded that the University's proactive approach to providing a wide range of learning resource and student support, especially during the pandemic, was a feature of **good practice**.

6.11   The University demonstrated some progress against its objective in the Strategic Plan 2017-2021 and has developed improved facilities for students living with disability. For example, investment has been made in accessible parking spaces, washrooms and ramps for wheelchair access. However, the University informed the review team that the number of registered learners declaring a disability has remained consistently low, despite providing the opportunity to do so on the Admission Form. The team determined that, given the size of the student body, there was likely underreporting and that the University could do more to encourage students to declare any disabilities. The team therefore **recommends** that the University adopt a more proactive approach to identifying additional student needs beyond existing processes for self-declaration.

6.12   The team found evidence of career support being provided to students - for instance, by Academic Advisors and also through the delivery of CV workshops. Nevertheless, the team found that there is scope for the University to enhance the careers support it provides to its students. This finding was also acknowledged by the University itself. Improvements in this area will also support the University to address other challenges

noted elsewhere in this report - for instance, the provision of graduate outcomes data to stakeholders as referenced in Standard 1.8. The University is already taking action that will assist, including by securing a grant from Campus Consortium to upgrade its student management system and thereby improve mechanisms for student support, including careers and the collection and use of relevant data. However, the review team identifies there is limited support on student employability and professional development. The review team therefore **recommends** that the University enhance student support for employability and careers services.

6.13   The review team concludes that the University provides a range of appropriate learning resources and student support services that exceed expectations given the challenging financial circumstances in which the University operates. Resources and services are accessible and highly regarded by students. 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 The University collects a range of information and data, determined by its own internal management and quality assurance needs and its external reporting requirements, particularly to the FHEC.

7.2 According to the Quality Assurance Handbook, the University measures its performance by evaluation of educational outcomes: academic performance and progression, graduate employability, and student and employer satisfaction, and information and data are collected to facilitate this. Information collected incudes:

- student evaluations of staff, teaching and learning
- Deans' reviews of individual staff and programmes
- departmental review of programmes
- external reviews of programmes and faculties
- KPI data on student GPAs and progression rates
- completion rates
- graduate surveys.

7.3 Student records and data are maintained in a student management system (Moodle). This system had been primarily manual, but in July 2021, the University received a grant to assist it to upgrade its student management system and digitise records, which will improve mechanisms for student support and the administration of student learning. Implementation of the system commenced in 2021.

7.4 The University also utilises a learning management system (LMS) called TopHat which underpins its online and blended delivery of programmes. The system also collects a range of learning and engagement related data, both in relation to students and their progress, and staff and their teaching.

7.5 The Office of the Registrar is responsible for administration and management of all aspects of a student's journey at the University. It is the hub of all official student records and is responsible for their accuracy, integrity and security. OREG ensures that academic staff maintain accurate records including programme and assessment changes, moderation data, grades and GPA calculation, and all other student-related information. OREG monitors student performance and oversees the general welfare of students throughout their academic life cycle. The OREG monitors all student admission, progression, recognition and certification, academic performance and general welfare of students throughout their academic life cycle at the University. As such, it has a key strategic role in the quality assurance framework.

7.6 The IT Service manages the University's information systems, and also provides a range of reports, some of which are standard (including reports required by the FHEC), while others respond to specific management requests. Reports include: Enrolment Data, Graduation Report, Retention Rate, Completion Summary.

7.7 The recently formed and strengthened Quality Assurance Unit has a role in both collecting and analysing information and data. It conducts the graduate survey twice a year, and also collects and analyses student evaluation forms. The report generated from the

analysis is then submitted to the Vice-Chancellor who feeds back to relevant Deans or Heads of Departments to address and rectify.

7.8   The review team evaluated the effectiveness of the University's information management systems and approaches through discussions with faculty, staff and students during a virtual site visit, and by scrutinising a wide range of institutional policy and procedure documents, reports and records of meetings.

7.9   The team noted that the Strategic Plan 2017-2021 had KPIs relating to establishing a complete system to analyse data required by management for decision-making, and establishing a management decision-making process based on scientific data. Like the evolution of the quality assurance system itself, as discussed in Standard 1.1 above, the University's capacity to collect, analyse and respond to data and information had been and was continuing to develop. The Self-Evaluation Document developed for the review noted a number of reporting system challenges, such as timeliness of responding to data requests and the need to integrate information systems. The draft Strategic Plan 2022-2026 continued to identify a potential risk that quality assurance measurements are not established or implemented fully.

7.10   In keeping with the University's ambition discussed in Standard 1.1, to go beyond the compliance requirements of the FHEC, there was evidence that quality and performance information and data was now being reported and acted upon proactively by the University. The review team saw examples of School reports to the Senate on pass and achievement rates, which were discussed at Senate meetings, rather than just waiting for FHEC feedback.

7.11   Students confirmed during the site visit that the collection of student evaluations was comprehensive, and the outcomes were acted on by the University. Students were also involved, via Student Association representatives, in discussion of the evaluation outcomes and subsequent actions. Student feedback on learning resources and support services was also collected and responded to. The review team heard, for example, how student feedback had resulted in improvements in online delivery during the pandemic restrictions.

7.12   During the site visit, the review team received a demonstration of the TopHat LMS, and discussed with staff how it was used in managing and monitoring programme and student performance. The team learned that staff use the system to monitor and support students at both the individual and cohort levels, and also to identify trends in their units and programmes over time. The information is considered and discussed at the departmental level, and the Quality Assurance Unit uses the performance data in course evaluations which are fed back to teaching teams.

7.13   The University has in place a number of key performance indicators, of which only two - GPA and Retention Rates - relate to academic performance and outcomes. The review team is of the view that the University would benefit from a broader range of KPIs on academic performance and outcomes. These could include success of particular student cohorts, progression and completion rates, graduate destinations, and student satisfaction. A KPI relating to actions taken in response to academic performance and outcomes issues would also help the University's move to a continuous improvement approach. The review team therefore **recommends** that the University considers broadening its academic performance and outcomes KPIs.

7.14   From the documentation scrutinised and discussions at the site visit, the review team noted that the Office of the Registrar, the IT Unit and the Quality Assurance Unit each has a key role in collecting, analysing and reporting on information and data. In addition, reports can be generated from Moodle and TopHat. The Quality Assurance Unit goes into the system and interrogates the information, or the IT Unit extracts data and sends to the

Quality Assurance Unit, and sometimes performance data is reported to the Office of the Registrar and does not go to the Unit. This variety of roles can mitigate against a cohesive approach to the collection and analysis of information and data. To address this, the review team **recommends** that the University reviews the roles and responsibilities for information collection, analysis and dissemination to establish an integrated and strategic approach to meet its quality assurance needs going forward.

7.15   The University has effective processes to collect and analyse information that feeds into the internal quality assurance system. Information relates to KPIs, student cohorts, student performance and satisfaction with their learning experience, and graduation paths. The review team therefore concludes 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   Information about the University, its activities, programmes and selection criteria are available on the website and the institution maintains content on a wide range of social media platforms. The University has produced a series of programme brochures, which include information about course structure, entry requirements and an overview of programme learning outcomes.

8.2   Schools are responsible for producing their own pages and content on the website. When schools have developed new content, it is sent to the Marketing and Public Relations Department (MPR) who check and verify information before final approval is issued by the Vice-Chancellor and final versions are supplied to the IT Department for publication. The MPR check includes a review of the accuracy of information provided, grammar and spelling, format and consistency with University guidelines. A similar process is followed for any amendments to existing information.

8.3   The Marketing and Public Relations Department is situated in the Office of the Vice-Chancellor and comprises the Public Relations Coordinator and Media Relations Officer. The Department is responsible for communicating with internal and external stakeholders, producing press statements, contributing to the University radio station, updating the website and responding to student queries, as well as producing the UniPulse magazine. The Department produces regular reports about its activities.

8.4   The institution informed the team that its Marketing and Public Relations Department has been encouraged to use 'aggressive digital marketing' to disseminate information to the public. Social media channels are being utilised to send information to current and prospective students, maintaining up-to-date information on these platforms is a challenge for the University. This strategy is viewed by the institution as a direct response to the pandemic and the challenge this has posed for face-to-face open days.

8.5   The team viewed the University's website and concluded that it was well-tabulated, accessible and contained detailed and pertinent information for the institution's stakeholders. This includes information for students about programme structure, assessment and credit. The University's Strategic Plan and annual reports are also available, as well as a wide range of guidance about student support service on the institutional website. Considering areas for development, the review team **recommends** that, for interested stakeholders, the University strengthens information about pass rates and graduate employment on its website.

8.6   The review team found that the Student Handbook and Calendar 2021 is comprehensive. It includes information for students on key dates, university staff, governance and university committees, programme regulations, grievance procedures, course descriptions and assessment. It also includes guidance on avoiding academic misconduct, counselling services and tuition fee support. Students informed the team that the Handbook was useful and provided the information they required.

8.7   The UniPulse newsletter provides stakeholders with a wide range of information. This includes staff profiles, information on co-curricular opportunities, student support and

welfare announcements, and promotion of development opportunities, such as CV writing workshops and stress management sessions.

8.8   The team found that initial approval processes for information are clear, robust and conducted in accordance with the University procedure. The University informed the team that it has a checklist in place to support arrangements to monitor the accuracy of information. The team scrutinised the checklist, which had been developed during the review, and concluded that it outlined the approval process detailed above and some specific areas for review. However, the checklist does not specify or record which parts of the website and/or social media pages have been reviewed. Furthermore, the team was unable to ascertain where oversight for the ongoing accuracy of information is assured. The team therefore **recommends** that the University implements processes that enable the comprehensive oversight of the ongoing accuracy of published information.

8.9   Information provided by the University to stakeholders - including the general public, prospective and current students and academic staff - is detailed, clear and easily accessible. Notwithstanding the need to strengthen monitoring arrangements, the team found available information to be accurate and that staff understood their responsibilities for producing and approving published information. The review 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   The University's SED states that all programmes are regularly scrutinised for relevance, modernity, future plans and resilience. This process is linked to the five-yearly Strategic Planning exercise, but internal reviews take place every year.

9.2   At the national level, all the University's programmes are listed on the Fiji Qualifications Framework (FQF), which sets the strategic platform for the direction of education and training in Fiji. This process requires the University to provide:

- Qualification Document
- copy (or extract) of Senate approval of the qualification, and its review date
- list of industry advisory committee members (and their experience) involved in the development of the qualification; minutes of meetings of this committee, and confirmation that the committee endorses the proposed qualification and confirms that the qualification meets the requirements of the Quality Standards: Accreditation FQF Qualification 1-15
- evidence of international peer review (for example, report from expert), and/or international recognition or accreditation from relevant quality assurance regulators or professional associations (where relevant).

9.3   The FHEC's Quality Standards, which the University must meet to retain its institutional registration and the listing of its programmes on the FQF, require the institution to have a system of assuring the quality of its programmes leading to a qualification, and of assurance that the decision to internally approve or reapprove a programme includes an evaluation of the programme design, time allocation, delivery and assessment, and that the facilities and resources required to provide the programme will be available when needed. Under the Standards, all programmes must be subject to cyclical review, which is informed by interim programme monitoring and leads to improvements in programme provision.

9.4   The responsibility for ongoing monitoring or review of programmes rests with the Learning and Teaching Committee and the Centre of Academic Development. The Learning and Teaching Committee monitors programmes from proposal stage through to delivery, convening at least twice a semester and on an ad-hoc basis when the need arises.

9.5   There is an External Advisors' Committee to advise the Vice-Chancellor on the appointment of appropriate advisors to conduct reviews of Schools/Departments/Centres/Programmes for the purpose of quality assurance and accreditation.

9.6   According to its Quality Assurance Handbook, the University evaluates its performance in terms of educational outcomes in four main ways: Educational Performance Indicators (EPIs), such as pass rates - any units with low pass rates are reported to the Teaching Quality Committee, Heads of Department, Deans of School, and the Vice-Chancellor. If low rates persist, the Vice-Chancellor calls for a review of the programme or unit; regular Graduate Destination Surveys to ensure graduates are finding employment related to their programme of study; surveys of employers of graduates to evaluate employer

satisfaction, and measure Graduate Attributes and Graduate Profiles; and regular Unit and Teaching Evaluations of all taught units to evaluate student satisfaction, and obtain constructive feedback. Teaching staff are required to conduct a self-evaluation to indicate how they have reflected upon student feedback, and incorporated this feedback into programme revision and/or modifications to their pedagogy. These Evaluations are provided to the Head of Department, Dean of School, and the Vice-Chancellor. On a semester basis, a Dean's Review is conducted of all programmes delivered.

9.7   The Standard Operating Procedures for Course Outlines, set out procedures for the reviewing of Course Outlines to ensure the qualifications standards are maintained. The Quality Assurance Unit conducts these reviews on a semester basis. With the advent of more widespread online delivery, the University has a Standard Operating Procedure for the monitoring and review of online learning and teaching. This involves, among other aspects: monitoring the virtual learning platforms; reviewing learner attendance and participation; observation of lectures, recordings, and chat/message exchange; reviewing provision of academic support materials; the management of practical sessions; monitoring tutorial management; and monitoring learner self-learning.

9.8   The University has entered into a series of Memoranda of Understanding with national and overseas institutions. These institutions and bodies provide external review input at the programme level. The University's Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery programme is externally reviewed on a two to three-yearly cycle by an external panel of independent experts. All of the University's professional programmes have professional accreditation and are subject to regular review to maintain this status.

9.9   The review team evaluated the effectiveness of the University's approach and systems for ongoing monitoring and periodic review of programmes by scrutinising a wide range of institutional policy and procedure documents, reports and records of meetings, and through discussions with faculty, staff and students during a virtual site visit.

9.10   Broadly, the team saw evidence of a range of approaches to both ongoing monitoring and periodic review of programmes. These included Deans' Reviews, external expert reviews, Senate reports, professional accreditation reports and professional accreditation certificates. There were some good examples of feedback from external reviewers resulting in positive improvements - the review of the School of Science is a case in point.

9.11   Student evaluations of teaching and learning play a prominent role in programme monitoring and review, enabling scrutiny of how programmes have been conducted, how lectures have been delivered, and providing general feedback on student satisfaction with teaching, learning and access to resources. The evaluation outcomes are provided to the Head of Department, Dean of School, and the Vice-Chancellor, with the expectation that feedback will be acted upon. Discussions with students during the site visit confirmed their views and feedback were acted on as part of programme review.

9.12   However, notwithstanding this evidence, the review team had a number of reservations about the systems and approach to monitoring and periodic review of programmes:

- The documentation states that all programmes are regularly scrutinised for relevance, modernity, future plans and resilience, and that internal reviews take place every year - the review team found no evidence of this scrutiny. The most regular activity are Deans' Reviews, and these look at individual staff teaching performance, rather than programme performance and outcomes.

- As stated, the Learning and Teaching Committee (LTC) and the Centre for Academic Development have responsibility for ongoing monitoring and review of programmes. The minutes provided of LTC meetings did not show any evidence of programme monitoring and review, and the Centre for Academic Development is only now being established, so there is no evidence of its role.

- Reports to the Senate from Schools reported and discussed pass rates and little more in the way of other quantitative or qualitative information, and some did not include any quality or academic performance-related matters. It is noted that the University advises it is in the process of developing ways to measure other indicators such as progression rates (for example, from one level of study to the next, and from undergraduate to postgraduate study), and qualification completion rates for each unit of study and programme. However, there is no consistent evidence that: the Senate is presented with sufficient information to ensure programmes are up-to-date; the provision remains appropriate; and to create a supportive and effective learning environment for students, as is required under this standard.

- The use of external reviewers provides the University with feedback in relation to the currency of programmes; however, it was not clear to the team how programmes were identified for external review, and how external benchmarks were identified for programmes that were not subject to formal external review.

- When asked during the site visit, staff stated the University undertakes internal cyclical review of programmes. However, the review team did not see a schedule of such reviews, or evidence they were conducted in a systematic fashion.

9.13   The review team therefore identified one condition that must be fulfilled before Standard 1.9 can be deemed met at the University of Fiji, which is to build up a holistic and coherent framework of cyclical programme review, by:

1)   developing a holistic and comprehensive programme monitoring and review policy and procedure
2)   including a range of quantitative and qualitative measures and indicators in the policy and procedure based on international norms and institutional strategic need
3)   establishing a review schedule such that all programmes are reviewed in full on at least a five-yearly basis, with periodic (for example, three-yearly) interim monitoring and reporting
4)   developing clear responsibility for overseeing the monitoring and review policy and procedure with one body, and ensure the outcomes are reported to and discussed by the University Senate
5)   ensuring students, external experts and stakeholders are formally involved in the monitoring and review procedures.

9.14   The overall view of the team was that the University has most of the elements in place for effective monitoring and review of programs, but these needed to be brought together in a holistic and coherent framework of cyclical programme review. The review team therefore concludes that the University **meets** Standard 1.9: Ongoing monitoring and periodic review of programmes, subject to meeting **a specific condition.** The University should build up a holistic and coherent framework of cyclical programme review and provide evidence of its implementation **within 12 months**.

9.15   The University of Fiji submitted further evidence in February 2023 which was scrutinised by the review team to determine whether the five elements of the condition had been met. The team's findings follow.

1) Developing a holistic and comprehensive programme monitoring and review policy and procedure. The further submission:

    a   clearly articulates the policy of cyclical quality assurance, and the responsibilities for reviewing performance against published KIPs, and reporting action planning to the Senate

    b   includes an emphasis on feedback loops and action planning, and included a process of corrective action where performance issues were identified

    c   demonstrates an integrated quality assurance system

    d   establishes a full programme review schedule.

2) Including a range of quantitative and qualitative measures and indicators in the policy and procedure based on international norms and institutional strategic need. The further submission:

    a   includes a range of qualitative and quantitative measure and indicators at both course and operational unit level

    b   shows ambition and challenge in setting the performance expectations

    c   sets out strategies to achieve the performance indicators

    d   demonstrates an understanding of implementation challenges with such a comprehensive set of targets through the appointment of a compliance committee to oversee implementation.

3) Establishing a review schedule such that all programmes are reviewed in full on at least a five-yearly basis, with periodic (for example, three-yearly) interim monitoring and reporting. The further submission:

    a   shows a comprehensive review schedule is in place

    b   demonstrates that reviews are taking place in line with policy and procedures

    c   indicates engagement with the review outcomes at Learning and Teaching Committee and Senate levels.

4) Developing clear responsibility for overseeing the monitoring and review policy and procedure with one body, and ensuring the outcomes are reported to and discussed by the University Senate. The further submission:

    a   clearly shows where responsibility lies for overseeing the monitoring and review policy and procedures

    b   shows how these responsibilities come together for coherent oversight

    c   demonstrates reporting to and discussion of review outcomes by the University Senate

5) Ensuring students, external experts and stakeholders are formally involved in the monitoring and review procedures. The further submission:

    a   demonstrates external engagement in monitoring and review

    b   shows that students, external experts and stakeholders are involved in the monitoring and review procedures as they happen on the ground.

9.16   The review team set the elements of this Condition to address its conclusion that, while there was a quality assurance framework set out in the Strategic Plan, the plan is strategic by definition, not operational. Further, there were a number of deficiencies in the framework and its constituent parts, and the five elements of the Condition were designed to point the way for the University to address these deficiencies. The further submission by the University of Fiji in February 2023 demonstrates a good depth of analysis, and integration into systems, which in the team's view will serve the University's quality assurance activities

well going forward. The review team therefore concludes that the condition has been addressed and Standard 1.9: Ongoing monitoring and periodic review of programmes is now **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   As discussed elsewhere in this report, the University is regulated by the FHEC, and must report quarterly on a range of matters, including its academic performance.

10.2   The University's current registration expires in 2023, and the submission for renewal will be made to FHEC by July 2022. In September 2022, FHEC will conduct a site visit to the campus and the delivery sites. As part of the process, the University will conduct and complete a Self-Assessment, covering such areas as Institutional Governance, Academic Governance, Quality Assurance and Continuous Improvement.

10.3   Standards 1.1 and 1.9 above deal with how the University's quality assurance policy and approaches, and its arrangements for external review and input at the programme level assist it to verify the effectiveness of its internal quality assurance, act as a catalyst for improvement, and offer the institution new perspectives.

10.4   As mentioned previously, the review team has seen evidence that as a result of external scrutiny and input, measures to enhance the programme delivery, assessment and completion were implemented and monitored by the Schools.

10.5   The University has also demonstrated its intent to go beyond the compliance requirements of the FHEC and build a culture of quality and continuous improvement, although as the team was told during the site visit, this approach is just developing. Until this review, the University has not had an independent external review of its internal quality assurance procedures, as it was moving towards fine-tuning its governance and operational systems. During the site visit, the review team was told that the University intends to embed cyclical external review in quality assurance policies and practices. The team encourages this ambition, and is of the view that the recommendations in this report will help facilitate this outcome.

10.6   The review team therefore concludes that there is an effective cyclical quality assurance in place, and that consequently Standard 1.10: Cyclical external quality assurance is **met**.

Glossary

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

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

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

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

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

Enhancement
See **quality enhancement**.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Oversight
Objective scrutiny, monitoring and quality assurance of educational provision.

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

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

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

Quality enhancement
The process by which higher education providers systematically improve the quality of provision and the ways in which student 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.