International Subject Review of Macao Polytechnic Institute Subject: Nursing

December 2016

Contents

About this review

This is a report of an International Subject Review conducted by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) of undergraduate nursing at Macao Polytechnic Institute. The review took place from 12 to 14 December 2016 and was conducted by a team of three reviewers, as follows:

- Mr Seth Crofts
- Professor Anne Peat
- Mrs Sala Khumula (student reviewer).

International Subject Review (ISR) offers institutions outside the UK the opportunity to have a review of a specific subject by QAA. The review method assesses the standards set and achieved by the subject and evaluates the quality of learning opportunities provided for students. The review benchmarks the subject'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),[1] as well as those subject-related external points of reference used by the subject/academic discipline.

In International Subject 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
- come to an overall conclusion as to whether the institution meets the standards for International Subject Review.

A summary of the findings can be found in the section starting on page 2. Explanations of the findings are given in numbered paragraphs in the section starting on page 6.

The QAA website gives more information about QAA and its mission.[2] For an explanation of terms see the glossary at the end of this report.

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[1] www.enqa.eu/index.php/home/esg
[2] www.qaa.ac.uk/about-us

Key findings

Executive Summary

The Macao Polytechnic Institute (MPI) is a public higher education institution. Its provision has an emphasis on applied knowledge and skills. It was founded on 16 September 1991 by the Portuguese Administration. The governance of MPI is carried out by the Board of Management (BOM) comprising the President, the Vice-President, and the Secretary-General. MPI consists of six schools and each school is headed by a Director, supported by Programme Coordinators for taught programmes.

The School of Health Sciences (ESS), responsible for delivering nursing programmes, is one of the six schools in MPI and is located in the main campus situated in the city centre of the Macao peninsula. The School of Health Sciences (the School) is in fact the successor of the former Technical School of Health Bureau Macao, which was established 50 years ago, and which became part of MPI in 1997.

The School of Health Sciences (the School) has as its mission:

- training nurses, medical laboratory technicians and pharmacy technicians
- identifying and addressing current and future needs for trained professionals in health care
- developing professional, academic, and cultural collaboration with related institutions.

The School has a strong commitment to providing a caring and stimulating learning environment, ensuring high quality education and training to prepare graduates with the competencies for work and life, equipping them to increase their competitive edge and to contribute to the health sciences and the economic and social development of the Macao Special Administrative Region (SAR), China and beyond.

The Head of the School, the Director, oversees the nursing programme and biomedical science programme. Nursing as a subject area is the focus of this review.

Recent significant changes impacting on MPI and on the nursing subject include the fact that the Macao Government has been investing heavily in the higher education sector of Macao, and it is anticipated that a new Macao Higher Education Law will soon be passed.
It is envisaged that the new law may lead to reforms in the governance and management of higher education. In particular, the proposals will allow for the development of postgraduate programmes at both master's and doctoral level.

The following are the strategic aims of the nursing subject:

- to provide a high quality workforce for the healthcare providers in Macao
- to respond to advances in healthcare delivery and treatment
- to meet the strategic health priorities of the Macao Government
- to ensure that nurses are fit for practice, and competent and capable to work in a range of settings
- to ensure that nurse training is underpinned by the best available evidence.

Key challenges facing the nursing subject area in the near future include: the recruitment of suitably qualified entrants to the nursing programme; ensuring that the Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) programme remains innovative and attractive to students; finding sufficient

good quality practice placements for clinical learning; ensuring that the teaching resources remain current and of high quality; and the development of research-active staff.

In reaching conclusions about the extent to which undergraduate nursing at MPI meets the 10 ESG standards, the review team followed the QAA *International Subject Review Handbook* (July 2016)*.* The review is an evidence-based process and the review team was supplied by MPI with the subject area's self-evaluation document and supporting documentary evidence. In addition, the students were asked to provide the review team with their own written submission, which explained the learning experience from the student perspective. The review team visited MPI from 12 to 14 December 2016. During the visit, the team met with a member of the MPI senior team, the Head of School, senior staff, teaching staff, staff from academic support teams, students and alumni, placement learning providers and employers. In addition, the review team undertook a tour of the facilities and visited sample clinical placements.

After analysing the range of evidence available and discussing it with staff and students, the review team concluded that the subject of nursing at MPI **meets** all 10 ESG standards.

The review team made three recommendations for improvement. All three recommendations fall under *Standard 1.3: Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment.* The first recommendation is to revise the assessment strategy so that the achievement of all intended learning outcomes and the progressive achievement of higher level academic skills is more clearly demonstrated. The second recommendation focuses on the need to develop more consistency in the provision of formal written feedback to students on their assessed work. The final recommendation relates to the need to formalise processes for internal moderation. None of the recommendations requires significant levels of change and as such the review team considered that Standard 1.3 was met overall.

The School's plan to implement the use of a new VLE in line with the institutional strategy was affirmed by the team.

Six examples of good practice were identified. These encompass the following: strong relationships with external stakeholders, ensuring that the subject provision meets the needs of Macao society; strong partnerships with clinical preceptors, ensuring excellent support for students in clinical placements; the well established approach to the peer observation of teaching; the proactive approach to learning resource provision; the engagement of students as helpers in clinical skills laboratories; and the 'Rainbow Family' approach to student support, which ensures that students can establish an enduring personal and professional peer network.

This range of good practice, which is present in six out of the 10 standards, assured the review team of the subject's commitment to a high quality student learning environment.

The review team came to the overall conclusion that the 10 ESG standards are **met**.

QAA's conclusions about undergraduate nursing at Macao Polytechnic Institute

The QAA review team reached the following conclusions about the undergraduate nursing provision at Macao Polytechnic Institute.

European Standards and Guidelines

Undergraduate nursing provision at Macao Polytechnic Institute **meets** all 10 ESG Standards and Guidelines.

Good practice

The QAA review team identified the following features of **good practice** in undergraduate nursing provision at Macao Polytechnic Institute.

- Strong relationships with external stakeholders, including external examiners, employers and the Special Administrative Region Government (ESG Standards 1.1 and 1.2).
- The strong partnership between academic staff and clinical preceptors, which ensures excellent levels of support for student learning in clinical placements (ESG Standard 1.3).
- Engagement of students as formal helpers in the clinical skills laboratories, which provides enhanced opportunities for peer learning (ESG Standard 1.4).
- The well established and systematically monitored peer review of teaching, which significantly enhances the quality of teaching (ESG Standard 1.5).
- The proactive approach to identifying learning resource requirements, which is supported by high levels of investment (ESG Standard 1.6).
- The 'Rainbow Family' system for providing student support, which ensures that students have an enduring personal and professional peer network (ESG Standard 1.6).

Recommendations

The QAA review team makes the following **recommendations** to the undergraduate nursing provision at Macao Polytechnic Institute.

- Revise the assessment strategy to demonstrate the achievement of all intended learning outcomes and the progressive achievement of higher level academic skills (ESG Standard 1.3).
- Develop a consistent approach to the provision of formal written feedback on assessed work and the sharing of good practice among staff engaged in marking (ESG Standard 1.3).
- Formalise processes for the internal moderation of marking to ensure the reliability of outcomes (ESG Standard 1.3).

Affirmation of action being taken

The QAA review team **affirms** the following actions that the undergraduate nursing provision at Macao Polytechnic Institute is already taking to make academic standards secure and/or improve the educational provision offered to its students.

- The School's plans to implement the use of the new virtual learning environment in line with the institutional strategy.

Explanation of the findings about undergraduate nursing provision at Macao Polytechnic Institute

This section explains the review findings in more detail.

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

Standard 1.1   Policy for quality assurance

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

Findings

1.1   Quality assurance is an integral part of the culture of MPI with academic and administrative staff, from lecturers to professors, Programme Coordinators to School Directors, and Heads of Administrative Units to members of the Board of Management (BOM) all playing a part in the quality assurance process.

1.2   At institutional level the Board of Management (BOM), chaired by the President and whose membership includes the Vice-President, Secretary-General and a representative from the Financial Services Bureau of the Macao Government, is MPI's supreme governing body ensuring academic standards and quality. The Technical and Scientific Committee (TSC) oversees quality procedures. Annual Programme Reports and reports of Periodic Review are endorsed by BOM at its regular meeting. The reports that go to TSC and BOM are analysed by academic staff and feedback is provided to the Schools Pedagogic Scientific Committee (PSC) for them to act as appropriate. The four committees feeding into TSC (Teaching Quality Committee - TQC, Degrees/Diplomas Award Committee, Academic Committee, Acquisition of Books and other Teaching Materials Committee) all report to TSC and play a part in the quality assurance process. In addition, a Student Admission Group and Joint Postgraduate Programmes Group have been established to advise TSC.

1.3   Schools are represented on the TQC and Academic Committee. There is a strong relationship with employers and the SAR Government through the well established Advisory Board, which has senior representatives from partner hospitals and other healthcare providers. This ensures that the curriculum and on-going programme development continues to meet local needs. The Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) programme documentation is sent to the Macao Health Bureau and the Nurse Director, who ensure the health status of the Macao population, and recent policies are reflected in the programme. Externality is further enhanced using external examiners who affirm standards and quality in the wider academic and professional context.

1.4   The School follows the philosophy of MPI and has a track record in managing quality through benchmarking against international academic standards and the involvement of international subject experts. It does this through the mandatory PSC and a Programme Group/Committee established for each programme, which has three sub-groups: Examination Board, Advisory Board and a Staff-Student Dialogue Group.

1.5   The School is responsible for quality assurance and for developing and implementing the academic standards of the BSN programme. The new study plan for the BSN programme was approved in June 2013 by the Macao SAR Government. The development of the programme was overseen by an Accreditation Coordination Group supported by a number of working groups, which included external consultants working on specific aspects. Meetings were held with key stakeholders including Directors of MPI's administrative and academic personnel, the Academic Affairs Department, the Library, the MPI-Bell Centre of English, and the Programme Coordinators, working together to ensure that academic and practice standards were met. The involvement of internal and external stakeholders helped to ensure that appropriate standards were set and assured the eligibility of BSN graduates for registration with the Macao Special Administrative Region (SAR) Government as practising Registered Nurses. The School's well established international

examiner team reviewed and advised the programme team for the purpose of quality assurance. This is a good example of how the School makes use of external experts in the development of its programmes. External examiners are senior academics with strong international links and experience in external examining and quality assurance. The external examiner reports are a key source of information in the monitoring of the programme.

1.6   An Annual Programme Review is completed by the Programme Coordinator and submitted to the PSC, and the Director writes a School report that is submitted to TSC. Annual Reports are monitored by the TSC; those not meeting the required standard are returned. Periodic Reviews have been introduced as part of the quality assurance process. A Periodic Review of the BSN programme was undertaken in 2013 with external panel members forming part of the team of reviewers.

1.7   MPI has agreements with partner organisations involved in the programme delivery. It has long-term agreements and partnerships with the Health Bureau of Macao, public hospitals, and health centres that provide students with clinical placement. Additionally, Kiang Wu Hospital and other non-governmental organisations are also partners for the purposes of student training while on placement. There is a Quality Assessment for Nursing Clinical Placements 2012-13, which demonstrates the support that students receive while on placement and the link between the School teachers and clinical preceptors, who are required to hold a Clinical Preceptor Certificate awarded by the Nursing Preceptor Training Committee, composed of the Health Bureau and other nursing institutions in Macao.

1.8   The evidence shows that students' representatives and employers are a key source of quality management through participation in a number of governance committees and through their feedback provided in the Graduate Survey and the Employers' Survey, which is used to make improvements and enhancements to the programme. The strong relationships with external stakeholders, including external examiners, employers and the Special Administrative Region Government, is **good practice** and ensures that the BSN programme meets local needs and compares equitably with international standards.

1.9   The review team concludes that MPI's quality assurance policies and processes, together with the School's effective implementation of them, provide an approach that ensures that academic standards are set and maintained appropriately and which provides an appropriate framework for continuous improvement. *Standard 1.1: Policy for quality assurance* is therefore **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   Programme management includes responsibility for programme design and review. The pedagogical arrangements and study plan for the new BSN programme were approved by the SAR Government Secretariat for Social Affairs and Culture in June 2013.

2.2   All programmes delivered by MPI are required to have an Advisory Board consisting of external representatives. This is considered necessary to link the community with the programme and to ensure that the programme's continuing development meets local needs, as already noted in the previous section, *Standard 1.1: Policy for quality assurance*.

2.3   There are several steps in the approval process of a new programme. Firstly, the programme documentation is submitted to TSC and academic staff analyse the report and provide feedback to the School's PSC. Once the final report is approved by TSC it is submitted to the BOM and the Health Bureau of Macao is consulted. The revised version is then submitted to the Macao SAR Government Tertiary Education Services Office and then to the Secretariat for Social Affairs and Culture for final approval. The process is clearly outlined in Programme Development Guidelines, which indicate that due consideration is given to *The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (FHEQ) and Subject Benchmark Statements, and to other international standards. It outlines the two-part process for approval: Part 1 considering the strategic justification; and Part 2 ensuring that the programme dovetails with MPI's requirement that there should be sufficient demand and that the School can resource the programme.

2.4   TSC is responsible for convening a validation panel, which includes three internal representatives and one external member from a tertiary education institution. Following the validation event the panel makes recommendations to TSC.

2.5   Programme design and development is one of the major responsibilities of the Programme Coordinator and the programme group within the School. They are responsible for ensuring that the programme objectives are in line with MPI's institutional strategy and with appropriate external subject benchmarks. The requirements of the Macao SAR Government and external reference points, such as the programme's position within the FHEQ are also considered. When the current four-year programme was introduced, students were consulted and the information gathered informed the development. The Programme Specification, which provides a student-friendly and clear outline of the programme, sets out the intended learning outcomes, which are constructed at the appropriate academic level.

2.6   The programme has to ensure that it includes well structured placement opportunities to provide students with both the academic knowledge and the skills required to ensure a positive influence on their personal development and application in their future nursing careers. As such, clinical placements are an essential component of the BSN programme and the document Quality Assurance of Nursing Clinical Placements 2012-13 provides clear guidance for all involved.

2.7   The review team concluded that MPI has a robust process in place for the design and approval of its programmes, which includes the involvement of students and external stakeholders. The School and the nursing subject area implement these processes assiduously. Appropriate reference points are taken into consideration when planning a new programme and the Programme Specifications are user friendly and easy for students to understand. All intended learning outcomes are assessed, ensuring that upon graduation students are fit for professional registration and practice. *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 nursing provision at MPI is characterised by a highly effective partnership between academic and support staff and the student body, which results in a student-centred approach that ensures high levels of academic and pastoral support. Exceptional levels of engagement are provided by preceptors and academic staff during clinical placements, allowing students to apply theoretical learning to practice and to experience very high quality clinical learning. A wide range of innovative teaching and learning approaches are used to deliver the nursing programmes, including lectures, seminars, small group projects, laboratory practice, and simulation activities that are delivered in the clinical skills laboratories. These learning opportunities are highly valued by students, who identified that their course is delivering a highly effective learning experience in both theory and practice elements.

3.2   There are well established strategies in place to gather feedback from students and to systematically address issues raised by the student body. Student representatives reported that academic staff are very responsive and frequently seek informal feedback. Academics also operate an open-door policy to listen to any immediate concerns raised by students. Formal feedback is collected through teaching evaluations conducted every semester, along with annual graduate surveys. The responses from these are carefully analysed and this analysis feeds into Annual Programme Review (APR).

3.3   A system to identify student group representatives is well established and they represent the student body at a number of dialogue meetings. Additional feedback from students is obtained through staff-student dialogue meetings at institutional and School level. These forums are well supported by students. Senior managers from MPI are heavily engaged in the dialogue meetings. Students value this commitment from senior managers and feel that their views are well received and that prompt action is taken in response to feedback.

3.4   Well established systems are in place to monitor the effectiveness of programme delivery, including APR, which involves systematic review of data such as student achievement. In addition, the nursing academic team undertakes an on-going reflective analysis of academic delivery and addresses issues raised by students. The academic team regularly evaluates and adjusts teaching approaches in response to feedback from students, teachers, external examiners and representatives of the health and social care community.

3.5   The review team found that there is a strong focus on supporting students to become resilient and to develop independent leaning skills. In addition, high levels of support are provided to achieve theoretical and clinical outcomes. This allows students to make effective use of the learning opportunities provided. Academic staff demonstrated a strong commitment to providing bespoke packages of support to meet the diverse needs of individual students, and they are very responsive to students who are experiencing challenges resulting from health or personal issues.

3.6   Very robust structures are in place to ensure that students have high quality clinical learning experiences. Strong partnerships were observed between academic staff and clinical preceptors. Several well designed mechanisms have been implemented to ensure high levels of liaison between the nursing academics and clinical colleagues, for example:

scheduled weekly visits from academic staff during placements; intensive skills laboratory preparation to refine clinical skills prior to placement; and clinical placement debriefing sessions, to ensure that practice learning is continually enhanced. The channels for communication between the School and placement providers are fully embedded and these mechanisms support rigorous assessment of practice. The nursing academics work in synergy with preceptors and clinical mangers to ensure that the highest levels of experiential learning are achieved by individual students. Systematic approaches to quality assurance and enhancement of practice learning are well established.

3.7 The nursing provision employs a range of pedagogic approaches that support students to become well rounded graduates. A clinical project provides an opportunity to integrate theory and practice learning and represents a major contribution towards developing self-directed learning skills. There is a well established programme of drop-in skills practice sessions, which are supported by senior students. This peer learning is highly valued by students. There are also opportunities for students to undertake international placements, which allow them to develop a more global perspective on their future practice. The team identified that these opportunities make a significant contribution to broadening professional experience and are highly valued by students.

3.8 MPI has well established and effective processes to deal with academic appeals and formal complaints; these processes are clearly documented and widely disseminated in the programme handbook. Student support staff and academics demonstrate a detailed understanding of these procedures and how to apply these to resolve concerns raised by students.

3.9 Established and well defined processes and procedures govern the management of student assessment and ensure that the assessment process is secure. There is clear and user-friendly guidance supplied for all staff involved in assessment within the Quality Assurance Handbook. The team formed the view, supported by external examiner reports, that the nursing provision at MPI is maintaining appropriate academic standards and that academic attainment is comparable with other providers in the sector.

3.10 The review team found that academic staff demonstrate a clear understanding of the requirements for progression and achievement of higher level academic skills, as students progress through the different years and academic levels of their degree. However, the current assessment strategy focuses heavily upon multiple choice examinations and other assessments under examination conditions. The team identified that there are limited opportunities for students to demonstrate the achievement of academic writing skills, although the clinical project provides some opportunity for self-managed project work. The review team **recommends** that the nursing provision should revise the assessment strategy to demonstrate the achievement of all intended learning outcomes and the progressive achievement of higher level academic skills.

3.11 Academic staff are committed to providing extensive verbal feedback to students on assessed work. This feedback is well received by students, who identified that this was an important part of their learning experience. However, the team identified that written feedback on assignments and examinations was variable in terms of the detail and the level of guidance provided to allow students to improve their future academic performance. In order to ensure the consistency and equity of the student experience, the review team **recommends** that the provider should develop a consistent approach to the provision of formal written feedback.

3.12 Marking and its moderation are managed collaboratively by the nursing academic staff. The review team established that staff use strategies to promote reliability in marking, for example the double marking of some scripts. However, these arrangements were not

always systematically applied and the team identified some inconsistency in practice. Therefore, the review team **recommends** that the provider formalises processes for internal moderation and marking to ensure the reliability of outcomes.

3.13   The firmly established policies and processes for the management of learning, teaching and assessment, together with the effective way in which the nursing provision encourages student-centred learning, leads the review to team to conclude that *Standard 1.3: Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment* is **met**. The three recommendations under this standard focus on aspects of assessment that can be strengthened, but the relatively low level of risk attached to these does not detract from the team's view that the Standard is **met** overall.

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 School utilises MPI's admissions policy, which is overseen by the Student Admissions Group under the guidance of the TSC. Student admissions and enrolment information is articulated in the MPI Academic Regulations, which are available online; details on entry requirements, course content, assessment, fees and programme specifications are also found online. The School is responsible for its own student number quotas and the setting of admissions criteria. The School considers the application while offers are communicated formally by the Registry. The School operates a fair and equal treatment for all applicants, with no discrimination on grounds of gender, age, religious belief, physical ability and ethnic origin; it only recruits applicants who are Macao citizens due to the constraints of the nurse registration policy in Macao.

4.2   Entry qualifications for an applicant include secondary school graduation at no lower than Grade 12, or those aged 25 years and above with a special ability condition. Potential applicants can apply for MPI scholarships and grants from both government and the private sector.

4.3   Potential students must undertake a selection exam that entails an English written exam and a disciplinary exam, as well as a face-to-face interview. Applicants can appeal using the complaints and appeals procedures, which are available from the Registry.

4.4   Students are given an orientation to the Institute and their course. Orientation is organised yearly by the student affairs office and the schedule is available online. They are directed to the timetable and given a nursing programme handbook that includes information regarding relevant policies and procedures, progression, conduct and assessment. They are also informed about how to avoid academic fraud and its consequences.

4.5   Students are expected to complete the BSN course in four years on a full-time basis, with provision for completion within six years for non-working students and eight years for working students. Students progress onto the next academic year after completing all the courses at their level and obtaining 80 per cent of the total credits, as well as having passed the set prerequisite courses. To obtain their bachelor's degree certificate, which is approved by the Secretary of Social Affairs and Culture of Macao SAR, students are required to complete the full 160 credits. Transcripts of academic records are available for those who only partially complete their programme of study. As graduates, students are recognised by the Health Bureau of Macao SAR to practise in Macao as Registered Nurses.

4.6   The team was informed that the School has autonomy in deciding the number of students to recruit, based on the needs of Macao society for a competent nursing workforce. This strategy is influenced by local demands and the availability of placements, as well as input sought from employers such as the Macao Health Bureau, which indicates the number of nurses required. The final numbers are then discussed with the School's Director. Student recruitment has remained stable at 60 for each of the last four years.

4.7   The Student Admissions Group formulates policies and guidelines for admitting students while the Academic Affairs team provides and analyses data on application and enrolment. This analysis is sent to the TSC and BOM, who provide feedback to the

Pedagogic Committee for action. The Pedagogic Committee passes on the information to the School, which then considers how best to improve the recruitment process.

4.8   Due to limited recruitment quotas nursing is highly competitive, with only the top 20 per cent of applicants obtaining a place on the programme. The review team was informed by staff and students that high achievers can be admitted through the recommendation of their school principal; this is, in effect, a scholarship.

4.9   The application process is robust, transparent and fair, with guidelines for supporting students with a disability. Students with special needs are asked to declare during enrolment; however, at the time of review, there were no students with declared special needs on the BSN programme. All academic staff are involved in the admissions process and interviews. Senior staff partner with junior staff to conduct interviews, which assists in ensuring effectiveness. All interviews are conducted by two academic staff, with marks and comments recorded on an evaluation sheet. Students are aware of appeals, complaints and mitigating circumstances procedures.

4.10   The team was made aware that student retention and attrition is an issue across the whole higher education sector in Macao due to the attractiveness and competitive salary rates provided by the casino industry. This leads to some students leaving the course before completion. Nevertheless, attrition rates are proportionately low within the School.

4.11   Students can further enhance their learning through a range of extracurricular opportunities. These include participation in paid research, where they are recruited as student helpers through the MPI, the Macao Foundation and the Science and Technology Development Fund. Opportunities are available to undertake a student exchange programme in Portugal, and other extracurricular activities are organised by the Student Union and the Macao Health Bureau. Students can also become student helpers in the nursing laboratory. Students spoke positively of the effects that extracurricular activities have on their overall learning. The team identifies the engagement of students as formal helpers in the clinical skills laboratories, which provides enhanced opportunities for peer learning, as **good practice**.

4.12   Upon completion and upon request, the Registry provides transcripts for students; for those who leave the course prematurely, this is in the form of a testimonial that gives an account of what they have accomplished. The team was informed that 99 per cent of graduates gain employment immediately, with MPI graduates representing 42.8 per cent of nurses employed within Macao since 2011. The School maintains a relationship with its alumni through the alumni association, which is manned by an alumni officer, and through graduate surveys that are undertaken.

4.13   The team concluded that MPI and the nursing provision staff manage the recruitment and admission of students effectively. The School provides effective support for the progression of students through their academic, professional and personal development, enhancing their overall learning. The team therefore concludes that *Standard 1.4: Student admission, progression, recognition and certification* is **met**.

Standard 1.5   Teaching staff

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

Findings

5.1   Effective policies are in place to support the recruitment and promotion of appropriately qualified staff who are able to bring appropriate professional knowledge and high level clinical skills. MPI has been very successful in recruiting high calibre nursing academics. The team met with academic staff who had had very positive experiences of their initial induction and who are provided with effective support to become established in their new role and to progress their expertise to become academic leaders and researchers.

5.2   The staff at MPI are well supported in terms of staff development opportunities. Academic staff are supported to attend international conferences, present peer-reviewed papers and develop new professional networks. Professional development needs are systematically reviewed by the leadership team. There is a well structured and comprehensive induction programme provided for all new staff. In addition, a supported 12-month probation period is provided. This assists new academic staff to develop key elements of their new roles, in relation to teaching, assessment and providing student support. Staff who do not possess a PhD are supported to complete advanced study. This support includes a reduced teaching load and assistance with course fees. The outcomes from this investment are carefully monitored and recorded. The nursing subject team has produced a significant number of academic papers and presented at international conferences on numerous occasions. The review team found that the nursing provision at MPI has established effective mechanisms to support staff at all stages of their career, which promotes a culture of lifelong learning and supports subject enhancement.

5.3   The team identified some initiatives that had been introduced to support the use of innovative teaching methods and new technologies. MPI has established an excellence award to reward exceptional teaching and this has been achieved by several staff from the School. There has also been specific investment from the Government's Science and Technology Development Fund to support the introduction of high fidelity simulation equipment to enhance clinical skills teaching. However, the team formed the view that the good practice attained in this respect could be more systematically disseminated across the faculty and the wider institution. This would encourage wider recognition for innovative academics and their developments and provide further opportunities to celebrate these initiatives.

5.4   MPI has established highly effective systems and procedures within the nursing provision that monitor the delivery of teaching and learning and promote the maintenance of good academic standards. A process for peer observation is well established within the subject group and is consistently applied to all academic staff. Staff indicated that they value this approach and find it highly developmental. On occasions, senior external academics are engaged to support some staff through peer observation, by providing external expertise. The outcome of peer observation is carefully considered by the leadership team and this provides a basis for establishing staff development priorities. The review team concluded that the well established and systematically monitored peer review of teaching, which significantly enhances the quality of teaching, is **good practice**.

5.5   MPI has established a coherent strategy to promote a research culture and to support the nursing academics to become independent researchers. This strategy focuses upon ensuring that teaching is informed by research. An Academic Committee reporting to

the TSC is responsible for supporting research conducted by academic staff and for ensuring that research informs teaching. Thirty-three research projects funded and led by School academic staff from 2010 to 2016, and a large volume of papers, have been published in international and internal peer review journals. The team established that MPI has made good progress in supporting research-informed teaching through strategic staff development, which has resulted in extending the subject knowledge of academic staff and enhancing the currency of the teaching that is delivered.

5.6   The effective approach taken to staff recruitment and development ensures that the teaching staff engaged in delivering nursing programmes are appropriately knowledgeable and skilled to fulfil their roles. The team therefore concludes that *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 MPI Strategic Plan underpins the use of resources to help to develop students' learning experiences. Laboratory technician and academic staff are responsible for making proposals to the President of MPI on the purchase of equipment. The School has a named representative who liaises closely with the Committee for Books and Teaching Equipment Acquisition to ensure that there are adequate learning resources for students.

6.2   Students are taught across 126 classrooms and three lecture theatres; they also have access to a nursing laboratory, which they can book online. There is a dedicated lecture theatre that students use to video conference with overseas students and teachers as part of their learning experience. The library, which has a vast array of books, journals, periodicals and reports also houses over 270,000 e-resources, which is the main source of information access for students. Students use electronic learning systems within the computer services centre and MPI is working to build an e-campus and e-learning institute. Other e-learning resources include the Student Information Web, MPI Webmail and the MPI e-Portfolio system. Two different virtual learning environments are currently available to encourage self-directed and independent learning, which includes clinical simulation and demonstration videos.

6.3   Students are given the opportunity to study locally and abroad as part of their clinical placements; guidelines are provided within the clinical placement handbook and students are given support by their clinical preceptors and teachers through regular meetings, briefing, debriefing, workshops, students' feedback and nursing team meetings.

6.4   MPI complaints and appeals procedures are available from the Registry, with the Academic Affairs Department being the main point for collating complaints, which it forwards to the School for actions. Students can appeal against examination results; they are required to submit a written complaint within three working days after announcement of results for final exams and two working days for supplementary exams.

6.5   Academic complaints are aired at dialogue meetings, which are minuted. Complaints or issues of concern can also be raised with year tutors and/or Programme Coordinators, as well as through BOM. General complaints are aired face to face in staff-student dialogue meetings and can be made to the student affairs office or through the website of the Student Union, which then communicates with MPI. Students also give feedback at staff meetings, with student representatives being invited to attend.

6.6   The views of students are gathered in several different ways. The TSC Secretariat administers surveys to capture student views, while academic staff are required to be available to students for at least six hours each week for consultation. Students also have periodic meetings with year tutors, who are academic staff appointed by the Programme Coordinator and approved by the School Director. These meetings aim to provide support to facilitate the learning process, with one or two academic staff assigned to each class. Their duties include working with the students to provide necessary support with, for example, emotional issues, personal development, and interpersonal relationships. Students also have access to a trained Student Counsellor.

6.7   Clinical placements are regarded as a very important component of the nursing programme. In total, 9 subjects / 46credits / 46 weeks of clinical placement are required in the nursing programme. Overseas clinical placements include 15 hospitals in Portugal and one of the biggest non-government hospitals in mainland China. Various resources are available to support students during their clinical placements locally and internationally; these include access to clinical preceptors, and the provision of guidelines and the clinical placement handbook. While on placement students are mentored by their teachers and preceptors. They are briefed prior to their placements and have regular meetings with their teacher once a week, and are debriefed by the School once the placement is complete. Students are also given opportunity to feed back on their experience. Other support mechanisms include workshops for placements given and nursing team meetings, which occur every two weeks.

6.8   An external examiner meets with students and staff at least once a year. Examiners attend a class and assess students' work. Students have access to external examiner reports on the website.

6.9   Students informed the team of the broad range of resources available through the library and e-resources; the team saw well resourced clinical skills laboratories containing a wide range of contemporary equipment. Staff spoke of the considerable investment made in the skills laboratories and simulation facilities over the last few years. The School submits a resource budget request one year in advance. This is considered and approved by BOM. The School has a well established process for managing learning resources and using statistical data to ensure that programmes are appropriately resourced. For additional resources required in-year, academic staff can make requests through the School's monthly meetings. Requests are considered by the Pedagogic Committee, with the final proposal submitted to the BOM for approval. For soft resources, such as books, journals and teaching equipment, the School has a named representative on the institutional Books and Teaching Equipment Acquisition Committee, which is a subcommittee of the TSC. Meetings are held once a semester to discuss library usage, budget, space and database acquisitions.
The review team learned that MPI is well resourced as an institution and that there is an accessible and responsive system in place for ensuring that programmes are appropriately resourced. Staff and students are very satisfied with the resources they have and with the processes for obtaining new and additional resource. The proactive approach to identifying learning resource requirements, which is supported by high levels of investment, is **good practice**.

6.10   Part of the students' orientation programme includes a library workshop on library databases and an introduction to MPI e-resources, which are provided by Computer Services. Staff and students confirmed that they use different formats of e-communication such as cloud storage sites, webmail, instant messaging services and other social media, with e-mail currently being the most used format to communicate with students for feedback and assignments. The team was informed that MPI has taken steps to improve consistency in the use of VLE platforms across the schools. MPI has recently terminated the use of one VLE and introduced a different platform in September 2016. The new VLE has been strongly recommended for use by all schools. To date, this has not been adopted by the School of Health Sciences but the plan is to implement it School-wide in 2017. Academic staff in the School have received initial training and the aim is to hold more training events for staff and students in the use of the new platform. The team **affirms** the School's plans to implement the use of the new VLE in line with the institutional strategy.

6.11   The team met clinical preceptors who confirmed that they are trained for their role. Records of their training are kept by the Health Bureau so that there is a register of trained preceptors available. Guidelines about the expectations of support for students are provided for preceptors. Weekly meetings are held between preceptors, students and teaching staff.

6.12   Overseas placements are optional but competition for an overseas placement is strong, with only a limited number of students selected. The selection process includes scrutiny of grades and general conduct. Students commented on the high level of support given by their teaching staff and on how valuable their experiences in Portugal and mainland China were.

6.13   Students informed the team that most complaints are resolved informally due to the openness of communication with their tutors and other staff. They confirmed their awareness of formal procedures for complaints, which are easily accessible. Specific complaints or concerns regarding grades are handled by Registry, which refers them to the Programme Coordinator for final review by the PCS. Students further stated that they can air grievances through staff-student dialogue and meetings at the School level, and with the BOM at the institutional level. Students reported that they are well supported and that their concerns and complaints are acted upon by the School. Examples provided to the review team to illustrate this include: the introduction of medical Portuguese as a module; the conversion of the Mandarin module to an elective; increased book resources; and the provision of different clinical placements because of student concerns.

6.14   The team was informed that student support starts from initial orientation, with the introduction of the 'Rainbow Family'. This is a 'buddy' system which is the School's initiative and which involves pairing new students with existing students. This fosters long-term relationships with other students and builds confidence for new starters, who learn from their peers as well as getting personal, emotional, academic and professional support. Students praised this initiative as it endures beyond graduation, where students continue to support each other in the work environment. The 'Rainbow Family' system for providing student support, which ensures that students have an enduring personal and professional peer network, is **good practice**.

6.15   Students are appreciative of the variety and levels of support systems available to them: year tutors, who are the first and main contact for both academic and personal issues; a trained counsellor; and Student Union officers. There is also a well established process in place to monitor student experience on clinical placements locally and internationally to ensure effective communication and liaison with placement providers. The review team therefore concludes that *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   MPI has a system in place for the collection and analysis of information, which informs decision making. The data provided on BSN student recruitment since 2008 shows 60-70 students recruited from a pool of 300 applicants each year. Currently there are 227 nursing students in the 2016-2017 academic year, 65 year one, 60 year two, 56 year three and 46 year four students (41 male and 186 female students with ages ranging from18 to 31 years old).

7.2   The Department for Academic Affairs collects information from students and employers. The Registry, Student Affairs and Department of Information also collect information, some of which is published on the website. The Registry is responsible for collecting student recruitment information, which is then passed to the School to consider the applicants. In 2012 MPI formed the Student Admissions Group, which considers the admission data and makes recommendations as to how recruitment can be improved.

7.3   The Academic Affairs Department analyses student data at the end of each academic year. Student progression information includes failure rates, the number and percentage of students getting straight passes in all courses, attrition rates and average graduating grade point averages. The data shows a low attrition rate, with only one to two students dropping out in the second year and none in the third and fourth years since 2013. Student progression is included in the Annual Programme Review; the review for 2014-15 demonstrated that student progression was satisfactory.

7.4   There are no students with a declared disability currently registered on the BSN programme; information, however, is collected and students are given the opportunity to declare a disability on the application form. There is evidence that MPI as an institution provides support for students who have a disability and that reasonable adjustments are made. MPI has guidelines for supporting students with a disability.

7.5   MPI has several methods to determine student satisfaction. The Student Affairs Office initiates a number of surveys, for instance First Year Engagement Survey and First Year Psychological Adaptation and Employer Survey. All surveys are analysed and results submitted to the appropriate group; once distributed the results are available online. At the end of each semester students complete a student satisfaction questionnaire, the results of which are considered by the Technical and Scientific Committee Secretariat. The Year Tutor collects information at monthly class meetings, and School and institutional staff-student dialogue meetings provide students with a further opportunity to discuss issues of concern. Students are also encouraged to submit online suggestions and complaints. There is a formal complaints procedure and staff and students are aware of the process; however, there have been no formal complaints submitted, which is thought to be due to the satisfactory system in place for student dialogue.

7.6   The review team concludes that there is an effective and reliable system in place for collecting student data to inform decision making and for knowing what is working well and where improvements can be made; therefore, *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   MPI maintains a publicly accessible website through which comprehensive information about the Institute, its governance, strategy, processes, policies and programme specifications can be assessed. The Institute provides information for the wider public through promotional materials that are proofed by the Public Relations Office before being disseminated to the public. The Academic Affairs Department and the Registry organise materials that are specific to student recruitment.

8.2   Current students have access to a variety of resources such as student handbooks and Institute academic calendars, which are produced annually by the Academic Affairs Department with assistance from the School, the Registry and Student Affairs Office to ensure accuracy. Students also have a student information web, which provides information such as study profiles, timetables, exams, clinical placement handbooks and external examiner reports. The Programme Coordinator and School Director are responsible for ensuring that this information is current and accurate.

8.3   On completion of their programme, transcripts and certification are made available to the students through the Registry.

8.4   Final approval for all School-related published information technically resides with the School Director. The procedures for publishing information at the School level entails the Programme Coordinators, together with teaching and administrative staff having initial input to the formulation of the information. This is then submitted to the School Director for checking and accuracy before it goes to the School's PSC committee for approval. It is then produced in hard copy or submitted to the Public Relations Office for uploading onto the website. Changes can be made following approval by initiating a change process through the completion of a change form.

8.5   Students informed the team that they were given information leaflets during the recruitment and enrolment phase, and that these and the information they accessed online was clear and accurate. Graduates are given the opportunity to promote the School to potential students and to share their experiences.

8.6   Every year incremental changes are made to published information for students, such as that in handbooks; such changes are notified to students in classroom sessions.

8.7   There is evidence of a wide range of good quality information which provides detailed guidance for current students, staff and placement providers. Information provided to students is fit for purpose. The team therefore concludes that *Standard 1.8: Public information* is **met**.

Standard 1.9   On-going 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   Processes are in place for on-going monitoring and periodic review. Comprehensive guidance on both APR and Periodic Review are provided in a very detailed Quality Assurance Handbook. There is evidence of a strong commitment to these processes from all levels of academic staff and central departments. The process for Annual Programme Review is carefully monitored by the Academic Affairs Department to ensure that reviews are strategic and address institutional priorities. APR reports are initially reviewed to ensure that they provide the right level of analysis, deliver a comprehensive assessment of the academic health of the provision and generate action plans for programme enhancement.

9.2   The APR process undertakes a systematic analysis of the learning environment and addresses issues raised by students and external examiners in relation to the effectiveness of learning resources and the infrastructure for student support in theoretical and practice learning. The team identified specific examples of developments to programmes that have resulted from the APR process, for example the strategic development of clinical skills facilities.

9.3   Data on student progression and achievement that is presented through the APR process is carefully reviewed by the Academic Affairs Department to identify trends and issues that impact upon student achievement. There is a well defined cycle for production and consideration of reports and these are ultimately scrutinised by Pedagogic Scientific Committee and TSC before final ratification by the Board of Management.

9.4   The processes for APR are clearly defined and the roles and responsibilities for individual academic and professional support staff are clearly specified. The monitoring and review processes take account of a range of feedback from student evaluations and annual graduate surveys. Feedback from external examiners is also analysed during the APR process and issues raised by external examiners are carefully considered during the production of APR reports.

9.5   The APR process explores the effectiveness of procedures for assessment of students and provides an opportunity for external examiners to comment upon the robustness of the assessment strategy and to explore opportunities to enhance assessments. Systematic consideration is given to external examiner feedback during programme monitoring and action plans are identified to address and follow up issues raised by external examiners.

9.6   A well established process of periodic programme review has been embedded and this runs on a five-year cycle. There are detailed guidelines for this process, which specify the responsibilities of the academic staff involved. Periodic review is initiated by the Director of the School and conducted by the Programme Coordinator, who seeks the views of students, graduates and external examiners. This process takes account of the changing needs of society in relation to health care education. There is a major input from employer stakeholders representing strategic health care mangers and the Health Bureau of the Macao Government; this ensures that the provision remains relevant in order to address evolving health and social policy and changes in health care delivery. The team found that

the periodic review process is managed systematically and reflects an effective and mature partnership between academic staff and the local health and social care economy.

9.7   Periodic review involves very detailed consultations with external examiners, drawn from an international background, who bring a global perspective and ensure that the programmes address international trends and adopt teaching approaches that are inspired by the most advanced practice.

9.8   There is extensive engagement with students to collect both on-going feedback and formal structured evaluation that informs the review of this provision. MPI is committed to ensuring that students' expectations are met. Student satisfaction is evaluated through effective student engagement in programme monitoring in the form of surveys and evaluations. Although significant effort has been made to include the student voice as part of the Periodic Review Process, the team identified that there may be further opportunities to extend formally the involvement of students in periodic review as government policy is revised.

9.9   Effective procedures for the monitoring and periodic review of the nursing programme are firmly embedded. The process has resulted in appropriate changes being made to enhance provision and to respond to the needs of students and society. The team therefore concludes that *Standard 1.9: On-going monitoring and periodic review of programmes* is **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   MPI continually examines its academic programmes and administrative procedures to improve the student experience and to achieve the highest international standards. At institutional level the BOM and the TSC ensure academic standards and quality. The Quality Assurance Handbook clearly identifies the policy and stipulates an annual review of programmes and a Periodic Programme Review every five years, both of which include external involvement. MPI has made it clear in their Strategic Plan 2013-2020 that a Periodic Review of all its programmes will be undertaken. It is expected that this current round will be completed by 2017; the BSN programme was reviewed in 2013.

10.2   QAA conducted an Institutional Review for MPI in 2013, with judgements indicating confidence in the Institute's management of academic standards and quality. In 2013 the BOM made the decision that the School would follow UK best practice standards for its quality assurance and give due regard to the Expectations of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (Quality Code), and decided to be considered for QAA Subject Review.

10.3   The Quality Code is recognised by the School as an example of best practice and the MPI quality framework has subsequently been based upon the Code, the aim being to ensure the School builds a culture in which performance is continually monitored, evaluated and improved.

10.4   In recent years, the SAR Macao Government have stressed the importance of Programme Enhancement and quality assurance of all local Higher Education Institutions. The study plan for the current BSN programme was approved by Secretariat for Social Affairs and Culture.

10.5   The review team concluded that there are cyclical processes in place involving students, employers and external advisors, ensuring revisions to the programme continue to meet local needs, meet international standards and at the same time create a supportive and effective learning environment for students. *Standard 1.10: Cyclical external quality assurance* is **met**.

Glossary

This glossary is a quick-reference guide to terms in this report that may be unfamiliar to some readers. Definitions of key operational terms are also given on pages 30 to 33 of the *International Subject Review Handbook*.

If you require formal definitions of other terms please refer to the section on assuring standards and quality: www.qaa.ac.uk/assuring-standards-and-quality

User-friendly explanations of a wide range of terms can be found in the longer **Glossary** on the QAA website: www.qaa.ac.uk/Pages/GlossaryEN.aspx

Academic standards
The standards set by **degree-awarding bodies** for their courses (programmes and modules) and expected for their awards. See also **threshold academic standard**.

Enhancement
See **quality enhancement**.

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 meeting one or more of the standards for International Subject Review.

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

Outcomes-based education
An approach to the design and delivery of academic programmes that focuses on what students will achieve and be able to do once they have completed their studies. It combines both the acquisition of knowledge and the application of skills and capabilities.

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

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
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 to support student learning. It is not about examples of good practice but how deliberate steps are taken organisationally to improve student learning opportunities.

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. The QAA officer's role is to oversee the schedule for the review programme, the selection and preparation of review team members, the composition of Review Teams, the planning and implementation of the briefing visit and the review visit, the editing and publication of reports and the oversight of any follow-up activity.

Recommendation
Review teams make recommendations where they agree that a provider should consider changing a process or a procedure in order to meet the standards for International Subject Review. The review team will indicate the urgency with which action should be taken by indicating a proposed timescale for implementation.

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.

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.
The self-evaluation document should use references to documentation that supports the assessment of effectiveness.

Subject
A sub-division of the provision of a higher education institution that is the focus for study around a specific academic discipline, for example engineering, history or computing.

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.