The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan

صندوق الحسين للابداع والتفوق
Al Hussein Fund for Excellence

Quality Assessment and Enhancement for Higher Education in Jordan

The Subject Review Handbook

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Subject Review Handbook

Al Hussein Fund for Excellence

Al Hussein Fund for Excellence was established in 1999 under the patronage of King Abdullah II. It is a not-for-profit organisation dedicated to promoting excellence and innovation among individuals and groups in both the public and private sectors in The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. The Fund has initiated pilot projects to develop robust internal and external assessments of the quality of higher education in the Kingdom.

Preface

I am pleased to be able to introduce this Subject Review Handbook. It not only represents an important stage in the development of quality assurance process in Jordan, but also demonstrates the success of the Hussein Fund for Excellence in piloting review processes in Jordan since 2000.

The subject review programme is a vital part of the reform process of higher education in the Kingdom. The number of voluntary participating universities in the pilot projects has testified to the stimulus the subject review method provides for the participants to self-evaluate their educational programmes, to seek improvements in quality of various subjects, and to open their doors to external commentary by specialist peer reviewers. Furthermore, it is also apparent to all involved in the early subject reviews that a review method must be clearly documented.

A Handbook does more than provide a technical description of the method and guidance; it also contributes to the credibility of the process by assuring openness and transparency. The Handbook represents valuable information drawn from the pilot schemes and the long association with the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education in the United Kingdom (QAA). It also reflects best practice implemented worldwide and, to maintain continuity, I envisage that this will be first edition of a series of Handbooks in Jordan that will support institutions in their quality assurance efforts.

Dr. Umayya Toukan,
Chairman,
Hussein Fund for Excellence

Acknowledgements

Al Hussein Fund for Excellence (HFE) and the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education in the United Kingdom (QAA) enjoy a close working association underwritten by a Memorandum of Understanding. This supports the exchange of information on quality assurance systems and processes in, and the sharing of experiences of their impact on, higher education. It also supports the appointment of an advisor on behalf of the QAA.

The HFE wishes to publicly acknowledge the considerable assistance provided by the QAA in the development of the method and in its sharing of its experience in subject review methods, gained over many years. This Handbook is a development of the QAA's *Subject Review Handbook (September 2000 – December 2001)* published on its website at www.qaa.ac.uk

The HFE, in developing its subject review method, has considered the range of quality assurance systems and processes being developed internationally. It wishes to acknowledge the principles of good practice represented in broad terms by the International Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) (of which the HFE is a member) on its website at www.inqaahe.org

This Handbook should be read in conjunction with related policy statements and supporting information presented on the HFE website at www.husseinfund.jo

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Introduction

1. The purpose of this Subject Review Handbook is to describe the method and procedures for carrying out subject reviews in Jordan. It also describes for reviewers and institutions the protocols, procedures and practical organisation of subject reviews from advanced planning through to the publication of reports. The focus of subject reviews is the educational programme(s) in a cognate subject area that leads to an academic award, generally a bachelor's degree.

2. Al Hussein Fund for Excellence (HFE) began pilot reviews in association with the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education in the United Kingdom (QAA) in 2001 in Computer Science. This was followed by two programmes of reviews in Business Administration from 2003 to 2005. Following these successful initiatives, the HFE has consulted widely and will continue a schedule of reviews with periodic follow-up to check the sustainability of implementation of quality assurance processes and standards. Its activities will be conducted in association with all institutions of higher education and the national community institutions that represent professional and vocational interests.

3. Subject review plays a substantial part in meeting the national policy to reform higher education. Its strategic aims are:

- To provide an independent assessment of the quality and academic standards of higher education and to encourage a speedy rectification of any major shortcomings which may be identified
- To support the development of systems and processes within institutions of higher education that include self-evaluation, internal reporting and continuing improvement
- To encourage the quest for excellence by awarding prizes for excellence
- To provide, through the publication of reports, effective and accessible public information on the quality of higher education.

4. The subject review method presented in this Handbook is based on the tried and tested methods used in the pilot reviews in Jordan and over many years in the UK and elsewhere in the world, However, it has also been developed to reflect the needs and the context in Jordan and the Middle East generally. The method and associated protocols in this Handbook encourage institutions to address:

a. The explicit treatment of academic standards.
b. The use of programme specifications.
c. An increased emphasis on the use of external reference points to confirm and verify the academic standards specified and attained.
d. A new emphasis on the effectiveness of the institution's arrangements for assuring the quality of its educational programmes, including internal and external verification of academic standards, engagements with its stakeholders (including students) and evidence of the impact of improvement plans.
e. Modifications to the descriptors for judging the institution's degree of success in meeting its stated aims.
f. Arrangements for a follow-up to each review not less than two years and not more than five years after the site visit.

5. Taken as a whole, these changes move subject review in the direction of a more outcomes-based approach, reflecting international trends.

The Subject Review Method

Introduction

6. The subject review method evaluates the quality of educational provision within a subject area as defined by a unit of review. Educational programmes of study at all levels and all modes of attendance (full-time, part-timer and distance learning) may be reviewed. The HFE will invite the institutions participating in the review programmes to put forward for review one or more programmes leading to the award of a degree and this will normally include an undergraduate programme. The review is focused, at the level of the subject, on the appropriateness of the academic standards set

and attained, the quality of learning opportunities, and the adequacy of the institution's arrangements to assure the quality and academic standards of the programme(s), measured against the institution's mission and the programme specification(s). English is the language of self-evaluation, review and reporting. The HFE will inform the institution of the set of key documents that it should make available in English for the visiting reviewers.

The Main Features of the Subject Review Method

7. The following are the main features of the method:

- Fitness for Purpose model of quality assurance
- Programme specification
- Self-evaluation
- Review against the subject provider's aims and its programme specifications including stated intended learning outcomes
- Six aspects of provision
- Peer review
- Institutional representative (facilitator)
- Site-visit by external review team
- Graded profile
- Overall summative judgement
- Subject review report
- Eligibility for an Award for Academic Excellence by the HFE.
- Follow-up to be arranged jointly by the Fund and the institution

Fitness of Purpose Model

8. The review method employs the "fitness-for-purpose" model of quality assurance. This seeks to evaluate the appropriateness of the educational programmes and the measures taken by the institution to ensure their relevance, currency and effectiveness. It contrasts with alternative models that may require compliance with centrally determined sets of aims, teaching programmes and examinations. However, where there are reference points and other requirements for determining or seeking recognition of the educational programme, such as accreditation requirements by the Ministry or by international or professional associations, these are also treated in subject review as part of the institution's responsibility to use external reference points effectively to determine and confirm relevance and currency. The fitness-for-purpose model places responsibility for quality and academic standards on the institution. This responsibility extends to the accountability of the institution for the choices it makes on the aspects of provision and the rigour with which it evaluates its own performance and seeks continually to improve.

Programme Specification

9. The institution is invited to prepare a specification of each educational programme to be reviewed **(Annex B)** setting out the aims of the programme(s), the intended learning outcomes (ILOs), the use made of external reference points in confirming the currency, relevance and appropriate level of the academic standards of these ILOs, a summary of the strategies adopted for teaching, learning and assessment, together with an indication of the range of learning resources specified. A template **(Annex B1)** is provided for institutions embarking on this approach to quality assurance for the first time, though compliance with this template is not required providing the institution can demonstrate that an equivalent, effective means of specifying the programme and making it known to students, academic staff and others, is in place. Annex B also offers a template (**Annex B2**) for institutions to adapt to standardise their specifications for modules or courses within programmes.

Self-Evaluation

10. Self-evaluation is central to quality assurance and to the subject review method. The institution is invited to undertake this as a start to the subject review process. There should be one self-evaluation report (SER) for each subject review, even if there is more than one educational programme being reviewed. The SER should be an analytical, evaluative, evidence-based account providing the context in which the programme(s) is/are provided, the distinctive features and an assessment of the

strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. It should include, as an attachment, a programme specification for each programme. Although it will be strategic in its evaluation, it is also expected to focus on the interests of recent, current and prospective students. The SER should be organised within the structure given by the six aspects of provision. The SER will be presented to the peer reviewers and forms the basis of the site visit. It should discuss in a balanced way both strengths and weaknesses in the provision. Where weaknesses are acknowledged, the subject provider is encouraged to discuss the issues and the steps taken to address them. Guidance on the conduct of self-evaluation and the preparation of the SER, including the presentation of statistical data on student progression and achievement, is set out in **(Annex C)**.

Review using the subject provider's stated aims, including intended learning outcomes

11. The internal self-evaluation and the external review are carried out using the stated mission of the institution and educational aims of the educational programme(s) to be reviewed. This "mission-sensitive" approach places responsibility upon the institution to articulate clearly its aims and to demonstrate the extent to which it is successful in meeting them. The ILOs contained in each programme specification require care not only in their development, but also in their implementation, so that they are appropriately reflected in the arrangements made to provide the learning opportunities and assess the level of achievements of the students. Reviewers evaluate the extent to which each of the six aspects of provision contribute to meeting the programme specification(s) and thus support the students' opportunities for learning and their achievement. Reviewers also evaluate whether the academic standards set and attained allow the aims set by the subject provider to be met and support the institution's mission.

The aspects of provision

12. The aspects of provision provide a common structure for each stage of the subject review process: the self-evaluation report, the site-visit, the judgements and the subject review report. The six aspects of provision are:

Curriculum Design, Content and Organisation (CDCO)
Teaching, Learning and Assessment (TLA)
Student Progression and Achievement (SPA)
Student Support and Guidance (SSG)
Learning Resources (LR)
The Effectiveness of Quality Management and Enhancement (EQME).

13. It is intended that the aspects of provision should be sufficiently broad and inclusive to enable institutions and reviewers to give full weight to the particular features of the provision in different contexts. Broad indications of what might be addressed within each aspect are listed in the Subject Review Aide Memoire (**Annex A**). This aide-memoire differentiates between the key features of each aspect and matters which interrelate and influence more than one aspect of provision. Institutions may address matters in addition to those listed in the Subject Review Aide Memoire in order to provide an evaluation that is appropriate to the specific provision and context.

Peer Review

14. Reviews are carried out by a team of subject-specialist reviewers, led by a review chair. In the first place, the peer reviewers are introduced to the HFE by the QAA in the UK because of their extensive experience in subject review and evaluative processes. They are appointed by the HFE in line with published criteria and operate independently using the published method and protocols **(Annex D)**. It is the subject-specialist reviewers' main responsibility to gather evidence and to make judgements on the quality of education provided. Subject specialist reviewers are drawn mainly from the higher education sector, although nominations and applications from industry, consultancy and the professions are also considered where their experience and insights are helpful and where they also have direct knowledge of higher education. Subject-specialist reviewers and the appointed review

chairs are briefed on the review method and the context of higher education in Jordan by the HFE in collaboration with the QAA before their first review visit.

The Institutional Representative (facilitator)

15. The HFE will invite the institution to nominate a senior member of the institution to take the role of the institutional facilitator for each review. The role is described in **(Annex N)**. The role begins with the early phases of preparation for self-evaluation and will normally end with the processing of the subject review report. However, at the discretion of the institution, the facilitator may play a significant facilitating role in any subsequent developments arising from the recommendations and any actions that are planned to follow the subject review report.

The site-visit

16. The main purposes of a review site-visit are to enable reviewers, having read the SER, to gather further evidence, on the educational programme(s), sufficient to allow them:

- To form a collective judgement on the appropriateness of the academic standards set and attained, the quality of learning opportunities, and the adequacy of the institution's arrangements to assure the quality and academic standards of the programme(s), measured against the institution's mission and the programme specification(s)
- To establish a graded profile and an overall judgement on the quality of that provision
- To prepare a draft subject review report.

17. Advanced planning of the site-visit is critical to a successful review. The typical visit schedule **(Annex F)** offers equitable treatment to all institutions and a degree of flexibility in arranging activities to suit particular circumstances. Some activities are essential to an effective external review and others are at the discretion of the review chair. The review chair will agree the programme of activities with the institution at least two weeks before the site visit is due to commence.

The Graded Profile

18. The graded profile shows the extent to which the institution has established and implemented its aims and ILOs, and provides an appropriate programme leading to an academic award that is quality assured, meets the stated aims and supports the mission of the institution. The profile is informed by the programme specification(s), the SER and the evidence base generated for and by the site-visit. The profile is created by applying a grade from 1 to 4 in ascending order of quality to each of the six aspects of provision. The grade descriptors are set out in **(Annex L)**, and their assignment is a matter for the professional judgement of the team. Each subject review leads to a single graded profile even if more than one educational programme is included in the review. However, the reviewers may wish to differentiate between the performance of programmes within their evaluation and in the conclusions presented in the subject review report.

19. A grade of 2 or better for an aspect means that it makes at least an acceptable contribution to the attainment of the stated ILOs and that the aims are at least broadly met. A grade of 1 means either that the aspect does not make an acceptable contribution to the attainment of the stated ILOs, or that the level of attainment of the ILOs does not allow the aims set by the institution to be met. A grade of 3 or higher for CDCO, SPA and EQME indicates that the institution has demonstrated that this aspect is verifiable against comparable programmes in the Kingdom, regionally and worldwide for the academic standards represented in the degrees awarded by the institution. A grade 4 in any of these three aspects demonstrates a higher order of performance that (while still able to benefit from continuing improvement) is at least the equal of any similar programme, verified by the use of external referencing and evaluation.

The Overall Summative Judgement

20. The overall summative judgement is derived from the profile. Each aspect has equal weight. A profile with all aspects graded 2 or better will be reported as 'quality approved'. A profile with two or more grade 2s will result in an invitation from the HFE to the institution to provide an improvement plan and to demonstrate in due course its impact. A profile with one or more aspects of provision graded 1 will be 'subject to further review within a year'. The summative profile that contains at least four grade 4 and no grades lower than 3 will be eligible for consideration by the HFE for its Award of Academic Excellence (please see below). The judgements made by the peer review team are tested by the advisor to the HFE on behalf of the QAA and the consultant appointed to the subject review programme, in session with the review chairs. The test for these outcomes comprises a check: that the review process has conformed to the published method and protocols; and that the judgements are evidence-based, in line with the evaluations presented in the main text of the subject review report, and consistent with the descriptors contained in this Handbook. An outline of the main conclusions is provided to the institution by the review chair on behalf of the peer review team at the end of the site-visit. However, the graded profile is not given to the institution until the outcomes are tested and verified after the site-visit.

The Subject Review Report

21. A subject review report is prepared after each review and is the main documented outcome of the review process. The institution will receive a draft of this report shortly after the review is completed, and will be invited to confirm its factual accuracy. The institution's comments, together with the test conducted by the HFE, will assist the HFE in formally adopting the report as a fair, balanced evaluation with conclusions supported by evidence. The HFE will wish to publish on its website a summary report for each review, setting out the arrangements for the review with a summary of the outcomes. This will be accompanied on the website by an overview report, drawing conclusions from the set of subject reviews in the subject.

Eligibility for the Award of Academic Excellence

22. The HFE, in line with its mission to promote excellence, wishes to identify institutions which demonstrate the highest levels of performance to the benefit of their students and wider society. It will invite the review chairs, together with the consultant appointed to the subject review programme and the advisor to the HFE on behalf of the QAA, to present the outcomes of the review programme with a recommendation for the Board of the HFE to consider making an award for exceptional performance. This recommendation will be based on the verified subject review reports and will require a graded profile not less than four grade 4s and no grades lower than 3. The decision of the HFE will be final and will be announced shortly after the end of the schedule of subject reviews.

Follow-up review

23. The HFE will arrange with the institution to follow up each subject review at an appropriate time, not less than two years and not more than five years following the date of the site visit. The prime purpose of this follow-up is to evaluate the progress made since the subject review by measuring the impact of the review process on the quality of the subject and the academic standards set for, and achieved by, the graduates. The follow-up process is designed to support institutions in their development of internal systems and processes for sustainable improvement. The follow-up review will lead to a report which will contribute to the HFE's overall evaluation of the impact of subject reviews. Both the individual follow-up review report and the overall evaluation of the impact of subject reviews will be published on the HFE's website.

The Subject Review Process

Preparation for Subject Review

Introduction

24. The preparation for review may be divided broadly into five stages:
1. Advanced planning by the HFE and the institution to establish a timetable and arrange for briefings.
2. The self-evaluation by the institution.
3. The composition of the review team.
4. The analysis of the self-evaluation report together with the preparations by the review team including reading the self-evaluation report and writing initial commentaries.
5. Preparatory discussions between the review chair and the institution concerning practical arrangements for the site visit and documentation.

25. The preparations for review are most effective when they are undertaken with full co-operation between the institution (including the facilitator), the officers of the HFE, the review chair and the subject specialist reviewers. The subject review consultant appointed by the HFE to lead and support each schedule of subject reviews plays a key role in the advanced planning, the preparations and the implementation of the schedule.

Advanced planning

26. Advanced planning is undertaken by the HFE in conjunction with the institutions. As part of the early planning of a review programme, the HFE will announce its proposed schedule, appoint a consultant to the review programme and arrange with institutions a phase of discussions and consultations. These will concern the scope of the reviews, the context within which the method is to be applied and any special circumstances to be taken into account. The precise timing of review visits is a matter for discussion and agreement between the institutions and the HFE.

27. The HFE will invite the institution to present for review one or more educational programmes leading to a degree. Normally, where the subject as defined is homogeneous, only one programme will be selected and this will be its major undergraduate programme in the subject. Where the subject contains a number of discreet disciplines, the HFE, taking the advice of the subject review consultant, will consult with institutions on the most appropriate means of capturing the range of disciplines within a sample of the programmes. The HFE may also ask the institution to supply information on the size, scope and nature of the provision to be reviewed, the institution's preferred dates for the review visit and any dates that are unsuitable. This advance information provides a basis for further discussions with institutions to plan and agree the timing of individual visits, and informs the composition of the review team. Under the terms of the Memorandum of Understanding between the HFE and the QAA in the UK, the HFE will draw upon trained and experienced subject specialists as peer reviewers. The HFE will also, if necessary, appoint an interpreter/translator who will assist the institution and the visiting review team by providing translation of key discussions and impromptu translation of key supplementary papers that had not been made available in English beforehand. The HFE will arrange appropriate briefing for institutions, reviewers and interpreters/translators.

Self-evaluation

28. Institutions are asked to undertake their self-evaluation in the period starting at least six months before the date of the planned site-visit. Guidance on the process of self-evaluation and the SER is provided in **(Annex C)**. The HFE will give the date for the submission of the SER to the institution. As a guide, this will normally be approximately two months before the schedule of site-visits.

The review team

29. The visiting review team will normally consist of not less than two subject specialist reviewers and not more than three, and a review chair who will normally be, but need not be, a specialist in the subject. This will vary exceptionally to accommodate any unusually large and complex degree programmes. The team will be composed by the HFE with advice from the advisor on behalf of the QAA and from the subject review consultant appointed by the HFE. The HFE will notify the institution of the team not later than one month before the site-visit. Although the institution has no veto or choice in the selection of the review team, the HFE welcomes any additional comment from the institution on the suitability of the review team such as any potential conflict of interest so as to ensure that the profiles of the team and the institutional staff are a reasonable match.

30. A review chair leads each review team and is responsible for co-ordinating and managing the review visit, and for ensuring that it is conducted within the HFE's guidelines. This involves: preparing for the review visit in liaison with the institution; co-ordinating the work of the subject specialist reviewers on the review team; ensuring that evidence is gathered and tested and that the judgements reached are robust; providing oral feedback to the institution at the end of the visit; and preparing the subject review report after the visit.

31. The responsibilities of subject specialist reviewers include: analysing the self-evaluation report and preparing an initial commentary; participating in the review visit to gather, share and test evidence and to make judgements on the quality of education, contributing written draft paragraphs for the subject review report; commenting to the review chair on the draft subject review report after the visit.

Analysis of the Self-Evaluation Report (SER)

32. The SER provides the basis for visiting reviewers to set the priorities and the programme for the review visit. The HFE will forward the report to the review team after checking that the report addresses the agreed educational programme(s), follows the structure for the report as set out in this Handbook and contains the programme specification(s). The review chair analyses the SER, using the Subject Review Aide Memoire **(Annex A)**, before contacting the institution and the other review team members. In order to achieve the best possible preparation for the review visit, the review chair may wish to clarify with the institution their understanding of the self-evaluation, with particular references to the external reference points for academic standards, the clarity and completeness of the programme specification(s), the supporting statistical information and the range of teaching, learning and supporting learning resources addressed within the SER.

33. The review chair also contacts the subject specialist reviewers to discuss arrangements for the visit and to agree the responsibilities within the team. Subject specialist reviewers normally assume responsibility for co-ordinating and sharing evidence relating to two or more aspects of provision. The review chair will arrange for the subject specialist reviewers in the review team to prepare initial commentaries on the self-evaluation and these initial commentaries will be e-mailed to team members and the facilitator at least one week before the site-visit commences.

34. In producing these commentaries, reviewers should refer to the questions in the Subject Review Aide Memoire **(Annex A)**. The commentaries should make full reference to academic standards, the programme specification(s) and identify matters on which further evidence is required. The initial commentaries form the basis of the discussion in the first team meeting of the review team to which the facilitator is invited. From this discussion will emerge confirmation of the appropriate focus for the reviewers' activities during the site-visit and the provisional lines of enquiries to follow at meetings to be held in the site-visit programme.

Practical arrangements for the site-visit

35. The HFE will arrange with the institution to make known to the review team the names, job titles and email addresses of the senior academic member(s) of staff who is/are a central institution contact(s), of the person(s) responsible for the educational programme(s) being reviewed and the SER, and of the facilitator. The review chair will use e-mail to introduce the reviewers and his/herself

to the institution. This exchange should normally take place not less than three weeks before the review visit. Matters that might be raised at this stage will include:

- Any necessary clarification of the SER and any feedback on the completeness of the self-evaluation that might assist the institution to make further preparations for the visit
- The role of the institutional facilitator
- the range of students' assessed work available for scrutiny and the extent to which a representative sample can illustrate the range of student achievement in line with the intended learning outcomes in the programme specification(s)
- The range of teaching and learning sessions available for observation during the visit, and the extent to which such observation may be required and feasible
- The documentation to be sent to reviewers prior to the review visit, the timetable for its receipt, and the documentation to be made available during the visit
- meetings and other activities to be arranged in advance
- Other practical arrangements for the visit such as the room and facilities for the review team.

36. The review chair will then write to the institution (with a copy to the HFE), in order to confirm the practical arrangements agreed for the review visit.

37. The review process requires the institution to make available accurate, representative and accessible information and evidence. Annex E summarises the range of documentation and information which is usually provided prior to and during a review visit, and provides guidance on the sample of student work to be provided. The overall volume of material provided in the base room should be manageable within the scope of a two-and-a-half-day visit. The student work provided should be sufficient to secure a reasonably representative sample, as indicated in Annex E. In most cases, institutions will be able to identify appropriate samples from the materials that are kept routinely for examination purposes. However, where relevant, samples of recently marked work that do not contribute to final assessment may be requested.

38. The HFE will advise the institution on the key documents that should be provided in English for the visiting review team, and will make arrangements with the institution and the interpreter/translator it appoints to the review site-visit for the translation of any other documents in the period running up to the site-visit.

39. Responsibility for making travel arrangements to Jordan rests with the reviewers. The HFE will confirm with the review team members the arrangements for transfer from the airport to the hotel and the accommodation. Daily transport between the hotel and the institution is generally arranged by the institution at times agreed with the review chair.

40. The base room provided in the institution should accommodate the visiting team together with the facilitator and translator. Either within, or adjacent to, the base room the institution will provide supporting documentation including the samples of students' assessed work. Light refreshments with bottled water should also be provided. The institution will also wish to set aside suitable rooms for the programme of meetings to be agreed as part of the site-visit schedule. Other facilities to be discussed in detail will include access to telephones and photocopying equipment. Subject specialist reviewers who bring laptop computers will find them helpful to compile and transfer written summaries electronically. However, the institution may also wish to provide a web terminal in the base room to support the review, particularly when the institution has a website and intranet facility that provides access to detailed relevant information.

The Subject Review Visit

The Review Process

The Purposes of a Review Visit

41. The review visit is conducted in a spirit of dialogue and co-operation between the institution, the subject staff, institutional facilitator and the review team. The main purposes of a review visit are:
1. to enable reviewers to gather sufficient evidence, starting with the SER, on the educational programme(s) to allow them to form a collective judgement on the appropriateness of the academic standards set and attained, the quality of learning opportunities, and the adequacy of the institution's arrangements to assure the quality and academic standards of the programme(s), measured against the institution's mission and the programme specification(s);
2. to establish a graded profile and an overall judgement on the quality of that provision; and
3. to prepare a draft subject review report.

42. A review visit normally lasts two-and-a-half days. A common range of activities is undertaken during visits, although the precise order and balance may be adapted to reflect the nature of the provision.

The Programme for a Review Visit

43. An outline programme is agreed between the review chair and the institution as part of the preparations for the site-visit. A typical schedule for a programme is set out in Annex F. The activities carried out by a review team during the visit include the following:

- scrutiny of institutional and programme documents, internal reviews and reports
- sampling of student work (examination scripts, coursework, projects, artefacts and dissertations)
- at the discretion of the review team, a small sample of class observations reflecting the range of teaching and learning being carried out during the review visit (this may include direct observation of classes, seminars, workshops, tutorials, practicals and placements as appropriate)
- meetings with academic and administrative/support staff
- meetings with students, former students and, where appropriate, employers
- an overview of the learning resources available to students on the programme(s)
- meetings of the review team to consider the evidence, share information and form judgements.

44. The review chair maintains an overview of the range and balance of review activities, and guides subject specialist reviewers in apportioning their time. The achievement of an appropriate balance between sampling student work, observing teaching and learning, reading documentation, meeting staff, students and other stakeholders, producing written summaries and arriving at a collective judgement within an intensive visit, requires careful planning and co-ordination. It is essential that the overall range and the balance of activities undertaken enable the team to develop a robust evidence base in order to make sound judgements made in relation to each of the six aspects of provision. Subject specialist reviewers are expected to prepare and agree individual timetables with a view to achieving this evidence base. In line with the emphasis on academic standards and learning outcomes, reviewers should allocate sufficient time for reading students' assessed work.

45. Where possible, the review team with the facilitator should meet before attending the institution, usually in the hotel on "day zero", that is the day before the site-visit is due to start. When two site visits are scheduled to run end-on with the same review team, the ideal arrangement is to arrange both "day zero" meetings for the two site-visits on the day before the first site-visit. At this meeting, it can be helpful if the institutional facilitator informs reviewers of any matters, from the institutional perspective, which may be important to their understanding of the programme being reviewed. This session may also be used to meet the head of the institution, the head of the faculty or school in which the programme is offered and/or other senior representatives. The HFE may, depending on the

schedule of site-visits, wish to organise these sessions into a single formal reception of representatives of the institutions and the visiting reviewers.

46. An initial meeting with available subject staff at the beginning of the first day of the visit allows an opportunity for the staff representatives to make a brief, concise, presentation (no more than 10 minutes) on the programme(s) being reviewed and the context, and to inform reviewers of any developments since the self-evaluation was undertaken. This first meeting with staff also provides an opportunity for the review chair to remind staff, with team members present, of the subject review method and its protocols. The institution may invite student representatives to participate in this initial meeting.

47. The review visit schedule includes a range of meetings between members of the institution and the reviewers to consider the various aspects of the provision. Throughout the visit, the review team meets daily to discuss its visit schedule and its findings. The institutional facilitator is an observer at most meetings and may provide factual information relevant to the team's discussions. However, the institutional facilitator may not attend the meeting with students or parts of meetings which involve direct discussion of grades, such as the final reviewers' team meeting.

Gathering Evidence

General Considerations

48. In gathering evidence, reviewers should use the SER as a base line, supplemented by supporting evidence provided by the institution and further evidence collected during the site-visit. The reviewers and the institution should refer to the Subject Review Aide Memoire (Annex A) to ensure that the range of enquiries addresses the full spectrum of the quality of learning opportunities and the academic standards of the programme. All reviewers are expected to identify, share, consider and evaluate evidence related to all aspects of provision.

49. Reviewers make notes of meetings with staff and students, of teaching and learning observations and of comments on the assessment and quality of student work. The collation and circulation of notes within the review team assist in developing a collective evidence base for the judgements made. A suggested template for making meeting notes is given in (**Annex J)**. Reviewers refer to these notes and their initial commentaries on the self-evaluation in preparing written evaluations of the quality of provision; the notes are retained by the review chair at the end of the visit.

Sampling Student Work

50. The sampling of student work is an important dimension of the activities undertaken during a review visit. This activity directly supports the evaluations made in respect of the academic standards achieved as reflected in Curriculum Design, Content and Organisation (CDCO) Teaching Learning and Assessment (TLA) and Student Progression and Achievement (SPA). It also contributes to the evaluations made under Student Support and Guidance (SSG), and the Effectiveness of Quality Management and Enhancement (EQME). Subject review requires reviewers to evaluate:

- the relevance and currency of the ILOs, as verified by the institution in its use of external reference points to confirm its academic standards in comparison with equivalent programmes elsewhere (sometimes referred to as benchmarking) (CDCO)
- the appropriateness of the arrangements for the assessment of students' attainment in line with the programme specification(s) and in particular the ILOs (TLA)
- students' achievement of the learning outcomes (SPA)
- the contribution that assessment makes to students' learning (sometimes referred to as formative assessment) (TLA)
- the appropriateness of the marks awarded (SPA)
- the extent to which marking is internally and externally verified (SPA and EQME)

51. Details of the sample of student work required for the purposes of review are provided in Annex E.

52. Judgements about the students' achievements are mainly based on the documented evidence of external reference points, the sampling of student work, the series of indicators or statistical information and observations of teaching and learning. The reviewers record their comments on the assessment design, standards achieved, marking and feedback to students in the Student Work and Assessment Note (Annex I). Where the arrangements made by the institution include oral feedback to students instead of, or in addition to, a written commentary, and information on this process is presented to them, the reviewers will take this into consideration.

Observation of Teaching and Learning

53. Observation of classes can provide valuable insights into learning and teaching, and may take place at the discretion of the review chair. However, any observations should be kept to a minimum in an intensive site-visit. In addition, the reviewers and the institution will wish to consider the extent to which, where the language of instruction may not be English, the evidence gained can be viewed as sound and representative. It is therefore recommended that class observations, if undertaken, should represent no more than the equivalent of two hours per subject specialist reviewers and agreed in advance with the professor or teacher as being feasible. The aim of direct class observation is to add to the evidence provided in the self-evaluation on the quality of the student learning experience in order to improve the reviewers' understanding of the range of learning opportunities available. A good self-evaluation report is likely to present a summary of information from internal peer reviews of the quality of a sample of classes and this may be considered by the visiting review team to be an adequate evidence base without the need for further observations during the site visit. Class observations in peer review are <u>not</u> a form of appraisal of the performance of the academic member of staff. If class observations are to take place in a site-visit, the review chair will prepare a preliminary schedule of observations for discussion with the review team and then discuss this with the named contact for the review and/or the head of the faculty or school.

54. The reviewer should meet the member of staff responsible for a teaching and learning session before it commences in order to introduce himself or herself, to discuss the overall intended learning outcomes related to the activity, to identify the particular intended contribution of this session and to determine how students are expected to learn from it. Understanding the overall purpose of the teaching and learning session is highly important. For example, a lecture delivered for the express purpose of transmitting information will be structured differently from a session designed to develop specific skills or encourage the application of skills by the students. Reviewers will not make comments during a lecture, seminar or tutorial and should not be intrusive or engage directly in the teaching or learning. In the case of long sessions (more than an hour), an appropriate period or periods of observation should be agreed, if possible, at the preparatory meeting. On occasion, students engaged in learning activities in practical sessions and independent learning may be asked by reviewers to talk about their learning experiences and how the activity being observed fits within their wider programme of study.

55. A standard Observation Note (Annex H) is completed for each teaching and learning session observed. In making their judgements about an individual session, reviewers evaluate whether the teaching and learning approaches and the materials used are effective in achieving the intended learning outcomes. This includes consideration of any relevant written or computer-based guidance for students and samples of student work where these are available. This Observation Note may also be used for internal peer review at the discretion of the institution.

56. After attending a session, the peer reviewer offers a brief oral feedback to the member of staff, even if this includes a later appointment being made to provide the feedback. This oral feedback is confidential to the member of staff, and is always given privately. The purpose of the feedback is to offer constructive comment on the observations made rather than to prescribe preferred practice. Reviewers must preserve the anonymity of staff in all written reports and in discussions with other members of the institution.

Learning Resources

57. Reviewers also gather evidence through direct examination of the learning resources accessible to the students on the programme(s) under review. Reviewers normally visit the facilities made available to the subject, and may observe students and staff using accommodation, specialist IT or other equipment in the course of normal teaching and learning activities. In looking at library provision, reviewers may undertake catalogue searches or request access to on-line facilities. In evaluating the quality of learning resources, reviewers' direct observations of facilities are considered alongside evidence from student work, written documentation, meetings with relevant staff, and meetings with students. The emphasis is on access and use of facilities by students in the subject. The review of learning resources may inform judgements in relation to other aspects (such as Curriculum Design, Content and Organisation, and Teaching, Learning and Assessment), which are directly affected by the quality of available resources.

Meetings with Staff

58. As a general principle, reviewers focus their attention at the level of the subject. The review team addresses matters at a central institutional level only when necessary because of their impact on the learning opportunities for students in the subject. It may be helpful to structure meetings with staff around aspects of provision, perhaps in combination. For example, the typical outline site-visit schedule (Annex F) suggests that academic standards are addressed taking more than one aspect in one meeting. In another instance, reviewers might meet jointly with academic counsellors, personal tutors and representatives of the student welfare services to gain an overview of student support and guidance. Alternatively, they might meet jointly with a departmental library representative, subject librarian and representative of the central computer services and/or other relevant staff to discuss learning resources in the subject. In developing specific agendas for these meetings, reviewers refer to the Subject Review Aide Memoire (Annex A) and keep a written record of proceedings.

59. Daily meetings between the review chair, the institutional facilitator and the departmental representative provide an opportunity to highlight particular issues which the reviewers wish to explore, and for the institutional facilitator and the departmental representative to raise any matters concerning the conduct of the review. Individual reviewers are encouraged to make any request for additional documentation or further meetings through the review chair. The review chair will liaise with the institutional facilitator and the departmental representative in making these arrangements.

60. An additional meeting between the review team and subject staff during the latter part of the visit, normally in the afternoon of day two or the early part of the final day, provides reviewers with an opportunity to identify as far as possible all key matters likely to affect the graded profile and to seek clarification of any points still outstanding. It also enables staff to engage in a dialogue about matters arising during the review visit. This meeting is not for the interim feedback of conclusions, nor is it the final opportunity for dialogue between the review team and staff.

Meetings with Students, Former Students and Employers

61. The views of students and others with a legitimate interest in the quality and standards of the programme(s) (referred to sometimes as the stakeholders) are important evidence. Whenever possible, all of the review team should attend the meeting with students, which typically lasts an hour (Annex G). The review chair generally chairs this meeting. At the beginning of the meeting, the review chair introduces the review team and provides a brief outline of the subject review method. Those attending should be assured that the contributions made will not be attributed to individuals. Reviewers should also state clearly that their final evaluation of the quality of provision will be based on a wide range of evidence, of which comments made by students form one part. One team member or the review chair should take notes and ensure that a summary of the main points is circulated among the review team. This summary should not attribute comments to individuals. The institutional facilitator does not attend these meetings, but may assist the team in identifying further information in order to clarify any issues students raise.

62. Discussion should be structured and all present should be encouraged to contribute. If a meeting has been arranged over a light buffet, informal discussion should be kept relatively brief and the meeting should then be convened formally to ensure proper coverage of key areas. Reviewers are seeking the views of students on the six aspects of provision and should ensure that a clear agenda is outlined. An aide memoire for meeting with student groups is provided in Annex G; this can be adapted to take account of the particular group. Reviewers will be keen to gauge: students' awareness of the subject provider's aims and ILOs; their experiences as learners in their programme; their responses to the teaching and assessment provided; and their views on academic and personal tutorial support, learning resources, and the arrangements made for student feedback and representation (including whether or not they were involved in the self-evaluation process). Reviewers should allow time for students to raise points.

63. The review team may also take into account the views of recent former students and employers or other representatives from the relevant industry or profession who are able to give an informed overview of the provision and its relevance, and of the attributes of the graduates. These important stakeholders may also offer their views on the extent to which they are consulted by the institution as part of the maintenance and continuing improvement of the programme(s).

Scrutiny of Documentation

64. Reviewers also gather evidence through scrutiny of documentation. The evidence base drawn on includes evidence of the uses made of external reference points, records of quality assurance procedures, reports and advice from external sources, engagements with stakeholders, including employers and professional and accrediting bodies, as well as internal documents and reports. Emerging judgements are refined and tested against as wide a range of evidence as possible; for example, views expressed in meetings by staff or students will be checked and tested against the documentation provided.

Making the Judgements

General Considerations

65. The reviewers' collective judgements on the academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities in relation to each aspect of provision are informed by all the evidence gathered and considered by the whole review team. In each case, judgements are based on the principle of fitness for purpose in relation to the stated mission of the institution, the programme specification(s) and the extent to which the aims and ILOs are being met. Grades are assigned by the whole review team, on the basis of the evidence gathered in relation to each aspect of provision and using the criteria for assigning grades (Annex L). All team members are expected to share information gathered which is relevant to any aspect of provision, but individual reviewers may co-ordinate the evidence related to particular aspects of provision. Written summaries of the information and evidence gathered should be distributed continuously among the team, including notes of meetings (Annex J), and completed observation and student work/assessment notes (Annexes H and I).

Review Team Meetings

66. The review team meets daily to discuss its findings, normally at the end of the afternoon or in the early evening. Team meetings are used to review the evidence gathered in relation to each aspect of provision, to form or refine preliminary judgements and to determine which issues require further exploration. Reviewers are expected to evaluate how the evidence gathered compares with the evidence and conclusions contained in the self-evaluation report and to test emerging judgements against (a) the strength of evidence gathered and (b) the descriptors used to determine the graded outcomes. The review team meeting at the end of the second day should allow sufficient time for a discussion of the evidence gathered in relation to each aspect of provision and a preliminary discussion of grades. Discussion of the information gathered and emerging judgements should involve the whole team.

67. The reviewers hold a final meeting on the last day to review any additional evidence, to agree the outline of strengths and weaknesses in each aspect of provision, to finalise the grading for each aspect of provision and to determine the overall conclusions to be reported to the institution. The institutional facilitator does not attend this meeting.

Written Summaries

68. The draft summaries written by reviewers during the visit focus on the evaluation of the evidence gathered in relation to each aspect of provision. Summaries should be analytical rather than descriptive and make direct reference to relevant parts of the programme specification(s), with particular attention paid to the aims of the programme(s) and the ILOs. They should also cite the sources of information such as the SER (section or page reference), meetings, documents, reviews of the sample of students' assessed work and any observations of teaching and learning. The written evaluation should summarise the relevant strengths and issues relating to each aspect of provision and, overall, should justify the grade assigned.

Grading the Aspects of Provision

69. The criteria for assigning grades are included in Annex L.
Reviewers are required to make judgements on, and agree a grade for, each of the six aspects of provision. In assigning grades, reviewers judge the extent to which:

- The students' learning opportunities and the academic standards set and attained support the programme specification(s)
- Each aspect of provision contributes to the attainment of the aims and ILOs, and whether the ILOs set and the level of attainment of those ILOs allows the stated aims to be met.

The Oral Feedback Meeting

70. The meeting with senior representatives of the institution at the end of the review visit is intended to provide oral feedback on the outcomes of the review. The meeting is chaired by the review chair, who will convey the key conclusions with strengths and weaknesses and the main evidence that will be included in the published report. The grades will not be presented, since these are subject to verification by the HFE and the QAA. It is not a consultative meeting which might affect the judgements of the reviewers, although a limited amount of clarification by the reviewers and the institutional facilitator may take place. The agenda for the oral feedback meeting is set out in Annex M.

The Review Reports

Subject Review Reports

71. A written subject review report is prepared by the review team after each review visit. The report includes: a brief description of the review method; a statement prepared by the subject provider of the aims for the programme(s) being reviewed; the graded profile and the overall judgement on the quality of provision; an evaluation of the quality of education, organised under the six aspects of provision; and the conclusions reached. The total length is normally about 4,500 words. The HFE has procedures in place for monitoring closely the progress of individual reports.

72. The subject review report is the main documented outcome of the subject review process and will be studied carefully by the institution as well as by others. It provides a permanent record of the review. The reports should be primarily evaluative and analytical. Succinct, accurate writing and a consistent style are essential. They should focus on the evaluation leading to the judgements made using the specified criteria and the evidence which supported them, in relation to the institution's mission and the programme specification(s). They should include appropriate statements and evaluations for each aspect. The conclusions reached should be evidence-based and logical and the

reader should not be surprised by the grades after reading the text related to each aspect. The balance and tone of the writing should also reflect the overall conclusions and give due credit for strengths as well as weaknesses.

73. The review chair produces the first complete draft of the report in the week immediately after the visit by drawing on the summaries prepared by the subject specialist reviewers during the visit. This draft is sent to the subject specialist reviewers, who then check to ensure that it is factually accurate and that it represents the views of the review team. It is particularly important that reviewers return comments on the first draft of a report to the review chair within one week, in order that s/he may prepare a revised draft subject review report within the production schedule for reports.

74. The subject review reports are scrutinised by the consultant in the review programme and by the advisor to HFE on behalf of the QAA. The draft reports are tested against a set of criteria and considered by a panel comprising the review chairs, the consultant and the advisor (attended by the General Manager of the HFE), before they are verified by the consultant and the advisor on behalf of the QAA. These criteria are: that the review process conformed to the published method and protocols; that the judgements are evidence-based; that the conclusions are in line with the evaluations presented in the main text of the subject review report; and that the conclusions are consistent with the descriptors contained in this Handbook. Competent review reports prepared by peer reviewers are not edited or altered by the HFE.

75. The subject review reports are sent to the institution when they have satisfied the internal tests. At this stage the institution is invited to comment on any factual inaccuracies in the draft report. The review chair finalises the subject review report in the light of comments from the institution and sends it to the HFE, copied to the subject review consultant and the advisor to the HFE on behalf of the QAA. At present the HFE does not have plans to publish the full subject review reports.

Summary Review Reports

76. The review team will also complete a brief summary review report for each review. This will record the date of the subject review together with a brief contextual statement of the review method and present the overall conclusions and grades for the reviewed programme. The HFE may wish to publish the summary review report on its website.

Subject Overview Reports

77. The HFE will commission the writing of a subject overview report based on the individual subject review reports produced at the end of each schedule of subject reviews. These overview reports will be published. They are designed to collate and disseminate information about quality and academic standards, promote best practice and enhance quality. Each subject overview report includes a list of the participating universities in the subject area and the graded profiles achieved by these providers.

Follow-up Reviews

78. The prime purpose of the follow-up reviews is to evaluate the progress made since the subject review by measuring the impact of the review process on the quality of the subject and the academic standards set for, and achieved by, the graduates. The follow-up process is designed to support institutions in their development of internal systems and processes for sustainable improvement. The HFE is confident that all institutions will welcome the opportunity to demonstrate progress and the impact of its actions taken in response to the subject review outcomes and any other relevant developments.

79. The timing of the follow-up review will be determined after discussions between the HFE and the institution. The review will normally be completed not sooner than two years and not later than five years after the date of the subject review site-visit. The timing will be influenced by three considerations:

- the nature of the outcomes of the subject review as presented in the subject review report (that is, the time reasonably required for the institution to address any recommendations and demonstrate any impact of its actions)

- any significant changes to the circumstances in which the subject is organised and delivered (such as major rebuilding projects, major revisions to the curricula in response to other changes or a major restructuring of the organisation and delivery of the subject)
- the degree of urgency and strategic importance attached by the HFE and the institution in evaluating the progress made and the impact of changes.

80. The outcomes of the follow-up review require three sets of reference points: the six aspects with grade descriptors as set out above under The Subject Review Process and in annex L; the criteria on which the evaluation is based given in paragraph 81 below; and a set of measures or indicators used to demonstrate progress and impact as presented in paragraph 82. It is the responsibility of the institution to develop the measures and/or indicators and to assemble other evidence of progress and impact.

81. The criteria applied to the evaluation will be essentially the same as those used in subject review (please see annex L). However, in addition to the graded profile, the follow-up review will reach evidence-based conclusions on the progress made and the impact of recent actions in the institution. These additional criteria, contained in the aspect The Effectiveness of Quality Management and Enhancement, are that the institution:

- Responds positively and effectively to external commentary, including from peer reviewers in the HFE subject review and other stakeholder groups by generating action plans that are focussed on key strategic matters, realistic, measurable and time-related
- Is developing and applying appropriate internal systems and processes with clear aims, evaluation and reports that sustain and enhance the positive features of the recent subject review
- Can provide evidence of performance and measures of impact of recent changes that give confidence in the capacity of the institution to assure and continually improve its quality and standards within the subject.

82. The measures or indicators are determined by the institution. However, the HFE would not expect these to be less than the set of quantitative information presented in annex E, including a three-year series of student intake, progression and output data, and summary reports of student satisfaction surveys (preferably with “before and after” comparisons between the base-line and the most recent responses). The measures or indicators may, at the discretion of the institution, also address the question of the extent to which any targets for improvement were set and achieved, and any substantial raising of the academic standards represented in the programme specification(s).

83. The base line for the measurement of progress will normally be the set of conclusions presented by the peer reviewers in the subject review report. However, when the institution has achieved a grade of 3 or higher for the effectiveness of Quality Management and Enhancement and the self-evaluation report (SER) was judged by the peer reviewers to be of a high standard, the base line for the follow-up review will be the SER.

84. Documented evidence provided by the institution should include any management action report generated as a result of the subject review and a clear indication with examples and supporting evidence of the progress made and the impact of changes. The institution may present this information in one of the following forms:

i. a recent internal review report or quality management report prepared for institutional purposes related to quality assurance and enhancement that meets the needs of the follow-up review

ii. a collection of internal documents used as part of the normal internal action planning and reporting, suitably collated with a brief overview or explanatory note and an index

iii. a brief SER written especially for the follow-up review not exceeding 5,000 words.

85. The follow-up review will be scheduled by the HFE in discussions with the institution. The stages of follow-up review comprise:

- Preparation with the scheduling of the date for a site visit; the appointment of a review panel and the arrangements for the submission of advance documentation based on paragraph 84 above
- A site visit normally lasting for two days concluding with an oral feedback report
- A brief follow-up review report prepared by the review panel and submitted to the HFE.

86. The follow-up review panel will consist of two external reviewers, of which one, if available, will have been a member of the subject review team, and the other will bring a fresh perspective. The panel will be led by one of the external members of the panel. For the follow-up review, the facilitator will if possible be the same person as made a contribution as a facilitator in the subject review. The facilitator role will be similar to that employed in the subject review (annex N).

87. The agenda for the two-day site visit will be determined by the panel in consultation with the institution. The programme of activities, when agreed, should be copied to the HFE. It will invariably include at least one meeting with key staff directly involved in the action planning and delivery of any changes; a meeting with a representative group of students and a similar meeting with representatives of other key stakeholder groups such as employers of graduates and alumni. The panel will also wish to examine a sample of supporting evidence including revised documentation such as programme specification(s), samples of students' assessed work, together with analytical and evaluative reports and other internal management reports that demonstrate progress and impact. This evidence may include the reports to the institution of external examiners, verifiers or consultants engaged by the institution.

88. The report prepared by the follow-up review panel will follow the basic format used in subject review with an introduction, an evaluation using the six aspects and a set of conclusions. The Effectiveness of Quality Management and Enhancement aspect will, in addition to the broad criteria set out in Annex A for subject review, address the three criteria set out in paragraph 81 above. The chairman of the follow-up review panel will submit the written report to the HFE. The HFE will wish to assure itself that the draft report meets the needs of the follow-up review in terms of reporting on progress and impact and addressing the criteria contained in paragraph 81 above. The HFE will make arrangements with the institution to forward a copy for the institution to comment on matters of factual accuracy before finalising the report and publishing it on the website.

89. The HFE will draw upon follow-up review reports to compile an overall evaluation of the impact of subject review. This evaluation of the impact of subject review, which will also use additional information from its evaluation of the subject reviews and its analysis of the reported outcomes, will be published on its website.

Glossary

Some of the terms appearing in the Subject Review Handbook and/or used in writing and using programme specifications in the higher education institution may have more than one meaning according to its context. To avoid confusion and to facilitate the understanding and the implementation of the subject review method, a brief glossary of terms is offered.

Academic Standards

Specific standards decided by the faculty or school, in line with its stated mission of the institution, that assure the standing of the academic award. The standards are derived from academic debate and custom, informed by the use of external reference points, including the attributes of the graduates expressed as the minimum knowledge and skills to be gained by the graduates from the academic programme.

Accreditation:

The recognition accorded by the Ministry to an institution which can demonstrate that its programs, or one or more designated programme of study, meet acceptable standards as specified by the Accreditation Requirements. It is recognized that institutions may also seek recognition of their programmes from other accrediting organizations particularly in professional and vocational disciplines.
The impact of accreditation at programme level will be to require an assurance of the existence of a specific quality level in accordance with the institution's mission, the intended learning outcomes of the programme(s) and the expectations of similar academic institutions, the students and the labour market.

Aims

The aims are a collection of programme-specific goals, written in a general manner, expressing the broad purposes of the academic programme, concentrating on the knowledge, skills and attitudes that the programme intends to develop in the students. They are generally expressed in terms of "*To provide*…." or "*To develop in students*….". They should relate to the mission and also to the more detailed intended learning outcomes. They are not to be confused with strategic aims or goals (see below).

Benchmarks:

Reference points with which to compare the standards and quality of a programme. Reference points may be internal (for example, historic points of performance with which to compare current performance) and external (for example, the accreditation requirements set by the Ministry, or international statements of standards available to the institution – please see below). Some standards are expressed as inputs (for example the space required for private study in libraries). However, the development of academic standards worldwide places a greater emphasis on outcomes represented by the graduates. For example, subject benchmark statements such as those employed in the UK represent general expectations about the standards of achievement and general attributes to be expected of a graduate in a given subject area. Benchmarking refers to the process of using external reference points to articulate and verify that the academic standards are at least equivalent to those used in comparable institutions.

Curriculum

The curriculum is defined as the whole organized learning experience of the registered student. This includes the content (traditionally described in a written syllabus), but also addresses the organization of the range of learning opportunities provided within the educational programme. Where the programme includes capstone projects, internships or equivalent practical and applied learning, these are also regarded as part of the curriculum.

External evaluator

An external experienced person in the field of specialization who is invited to review the structure and content of a programme, its relevance to the ILOs, the standards and appropriateness of student assessments and attainment against the specification, and probably also evaluating the existing learning resources and whether or not they satisfy the programme requirements. The institution is responsible for specifying the evaluators' role and appointing them.

External Reference Points

Points of reference used by an institution to establish, confirm or verify the academic standards for the educational programme(s). They may be other comparable institutions, existing accreditation requirements or benchmarks used by professional bodies and national and international agencies to specify standards. They are employed in institutions to assist it to verify the standards articulated in a programme specification and also to verify the actual level of achievements by graduates.

Institution

A university or equivalent educational institute that awards degrees and which contains faculties and schools that are responsible for designing and providing educational programmes operating within a set of policies, regulations and procedures.

Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs):

The knowledge, understanding and skills which the institution intends the successful students to have gained on completion of the programme. For the purposes of quality assurance systems, these should be expressed as outcomes rather than as a traditionally written syllabus. They are the equivalent of "objectives" when this term is used to describe the intended level of achievement of the successful student. They are expressed at programme and course/module levels.

Internal Systems and processes for Quality Management and Assurance

The system adopted by the institution, and within the institution the faculty or school, to maintain and improve the quality of the educational programmes and other elements affecting them. Such an outcomes-related system involves precise specifications for quality, the identification of good practice as well as of learning deficiencies and obstacles, performance follow-up, suggestions for development and enhancement, and the systematic review and development of processes for establishing effective policies, strategies and priorities to support continuing improvement. It will be underpinned by formal policies, regulations and procedures and the means of accounting for performance.

Learning Resources

The facilities accessible by registered students and their tutors that support the curriculum. These generally include accommodation, libraries including catalogue, web services and librarian together with their stock of texts, journals and other materials, computing and other IT facilities, laboratories and workshop facilities and specialist equipment. They may also be defined to include additional facilities outwith the school, faculty or institution such as the resources organized in professional and vocational practice for internships. For the purpose of subject review the learning resources aspect does include technical and administrative support staff, but excludes the match of academic staff to the curriculum, which is addressed under Curriculum Design, Content and Organisation.

Peer Reviewer

A person who is professionally equal in calibre and subject specialism to those delivering the provision but not from the same institution or have any other conflict of interest, who can contribute to the review of an educational programme both for external reviews arranged by the HFE and for formal accreditation review purposes.

Programme evaluation

The process used to evaluate or review the educational programme and to obtain the opinions of the stakeholders of the programme, including students, faculty members, the graduates, and the governing council with the aim of improving and developing the programme to cope with the advances in subject matter and the needs of society and the environment. Self-evaluation is central to internal quality assurance systems. External reviews, for example in connection with an external subject review, will use the self-evaluation reports as a starting point and lead to an evaluation report.

Programme Specification

A programme specification is a concise description of the intended outcomes of learning from a higher education programme, and the means by which these outcomes are achieved and demonstrated. It is intended for use by all those directly involved in the design and delivery of the programme, including students, staff, peer reviewers and external evaluators, and should also be of interest to other stakeholders such as the employing community.

Quality Assurance
For the purposes of this process, quality assurance is defined as the systems and processes applied by a responsible organisation to ensure that, informed by its mission, academic standards are defined and achieved in line with equivalent standards nationally and internationally, and that the quality of learning opportunities, research and community involvement are appropriate and fulfill the expectations of the range of stakeholders.

Stakeholders:
Those groups and individuals which have a legitimate interest in the educational activities of the institution both in respect of the quality and standards of the education and also in respect of the effectiveness of the systems and processes for assuring the quality. An effective internal review process or self-evaluation will include the key stakeholder groups. The precise range of stakeholder groups and their differentiated interests depend upon the mission, the range of educational activities in the institution and local circumstances. The range is usually defined by a scoping study. Examples of groups with a legitimate interest include current students, alumni, intending students, staff in the institution, the employing community, the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO), the sponsors and other funding organisations and, where appropriate, professional organisations.

Strategic Aims or Goals
A collection of aims that are specific to the institution, school, faculty, department or educational programme that set out the means to achieve a mission or an explicit development project for improvement. They are usually derived from an assessment of needs and take account of the strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities, the preferred direction and the chosen priorities. They are written in a general manner, focusing on the academic programmes with due regard to interests of the clients and other stakeholders. They are likely to take a medium and long-term view.

Student Assessment:
The different types of assessment including examinations or semester activities that the teacher sets to ensure that the students have achieved the ILOs. Diagnostic assessment provides an indicator of a learner’s aptitude and preparedness for a programme of study and identifies any specific individual learning needs or interests. Formative assessment is regarded as part of the process of learning and requires a high degree of dialogue between the teacher and the student to provide the students with feedback on achievement and progress and help them determine further learning that will enhance performance and understanding. Summative assessment is generally organised at the end of a unit, course or module of a programme. Assessment methods range widely from formal, time-constrained, unseen, closed-book examination at the end of a course or programme to projects that produce an artifact, a dissertation or a portfolio of work.

Subject
The cognate area addressed by an educational program. It may include one or more disciplines within it, particularly in vocational and professional subjects where multi-disciplinary and inter-disciplinary study are common. For example, “Engineering” typically includes disciplines such as Civil Engineering, Mechanical Engineering and Electrical and Electronic Engineering. Educational programmes may also address multi-disciplinary areas such Production Engineering as well as contain essential elements such as applied mathematics.

Teaching, Learning and Assessment:
The methods and processes used to help students to achieve the ILOs for the course. The range of methods will generally be informed by a strategy for learning, teaching and assessment. Examples of methods include: a case study to teach students how to analyse information and reach a decision based on available evidence; writing a review paper for the students to gain the skills of self-learning and presentation; practical sessions for the students to gain practical skills; distance learning with a multi-media range of materials; and executing laboratory or field-work experiments to train the students to gather information, analyse the results and reach specific conclusions. Independent learning frequently features in current curricula and assessment methods, or at least in the strategic aims of institutions. It may include placing varying degrees of responsibility for learning upon the students, ranging from a strategic goal to produce graduates who are autonomous self-sustaining

learners in their intended professions, to a negotiated curriculum to the setting of personal targets and the recorded acquisition of personal skills in a portfolio.

Follow-up Review

Follow-up reviews extend the subject review process and provide the institution with an opportunity to demonstrate the progress made and the impact of actions taken after the subject review site visit. They are designed to support the development of internal systems and processes for sustained quality assurance and continuing improvement.

Annex A
The Subject Review Aide Memoire

Introduction

1. These notes are structured around the six aspects of provision, and offer a set of prompts which are designed to ensure focused coverage of each aspect of provision throughout the review and the associated report writing.

2. This aide memoire is designed for use by institutions undertaking self-evaluation, and by reviewers to guide the:

- analysis of the self-evaluation report (SER) prior to the visit
- gathering of evidence during the visit
- writing of the subject review report.

3. The key features for each aspect of provision are covered broadly by this aide memoire. However, the content of the aide memoire should not be regarded as prescriptive or exhaustive. The stated aims of the subject provider together with the programme specification(s) and the self-evaluation report form the basis for review. Reviewers use the aide memoire together with the SER, their analysis of it, the preparatory e-mail discussions between the review chair and the institution's representatives and other documentation, to add and/or highlight questions and issues which have been identified as being of significance within the particular provision being reviewed.

4. It is essential that institutions embarking on self-evaluation, and visiting peer reviewers, maintain written records of evidence as it is gathered, including notes of meetings and sources in written documentation, as well as completed observation notes and student work/assessment notes. As a general principle, for subject review, institutions and reviewers should focus their attention at the level of the subject and address central institutional issues only when these have a direct impact on the subject being reviewed.

5. In subject review, the aide-memoire should be applied to address generically the range of provision. When the HFE has invited the institution to put forward for external review more than one programme, the aide-memoire should be used to address the range and only discuss individual programmes when there is a need to differentiate.

The Subject Review Aide Memoire:
Curriculum Design, Content and Organisation

Consider the programme specification(s), and identify the relevant aims and ILOs, and statements in the self-evaluation report (SER).

Evaluate the extent to which this aspect contributes to meeting the programme specification(s) with particular reference to the ILOs. Do the ILOs set, and the curricula informed by those ILOs, allow the aims to be met?

1. Evaluation of the intended learning outcomes in relation to the broad aims of the provision and to any applicable external reference points.

Reviewers should ask:

What are the intended learning outcomes (ILOs) for the programme(s)?
How do they relate to the overall aims of the programme(s) as stated by the institution?
Are they appropriate to the aims?
How do they relate to external reference points including, where applicable, relevant benchmark statements and accreditation requirements by the Ministry and professional organisations?

Potential sources of information and evidence will include the self-evaluation, programme specification(s), the most recent annual reports, curricular documents, subject benchmark statements, the Ministry's accreditation requirements and details of requirements of professional organisations.

Review activities may also include an analysis of programme content, discussions with members of the teaching staff. They should then evaluate the intended learning outcomes against the aims of the provision as described in the self-evaluation and against relevant external reference points. As a result of these activities reviewers should be able to judge:

- whether the ILOs are clearly stated;
- whether they reflect appropriately the overall aims of the provision and relevant benchmark statements and other external references.

2. Evaluation of the effectiveness of the means by which the subject provider designs and organises the curriculum to support the attainment of the intended learning outcomes.

Reviewers should ask:

How does the institution ensure that curriculum content enables students to achieve the intended learning outcomes?
How does the institution ensure that the design and organisation of the curricula are effective in promoting student learning and achievement of the intended learning outcomes?

Sources of information and evidence will include the SER, curricular documents such as manuals or handbooks, and curricular review and validation reports. Reviewers should seek information about levels and modes of study, breadth and depth of study, inter- and multi-disciplinarily, coherence, flexibility and student choice, as well as the role of professional and/or statutory bodies where relevant.

Review activities may also include discussions with members of the teaching teams, support staff and administrative staff, and discussions with students. They should then evaluate the effectiveness of the way in which the institution plans, designs and approves the curricula. As a result of these activities reviewers should be able to assess the adequacy of procedures for ensuring that programmes are designed to enable students to achieve the ILOs.

3. Evaluation of the means by which the intended learning outcomes are communicated to students, staff and other with a direct interest such as potential employers.

Reviewers should ask:

How are the ILOs of a programme and its constituent parts communicated to staff, students and external examiners?
Do the students know what is expected of them?

Sources of information and evidence will include the SER, programme specifications, programme or subject handbooks and documents such as module guides and assessment schedules.

Review activities may also include discussions with teaching teams and students. They should then evaluate the way in which subject providers convey their expectations to staff and students. As a result of these activities reviewers should be able to judge the adequacy of arrangements within the subject for communicating intended learning outcomes.

4. Evaluation of the means by which the institution creates the conditions for the attainment of the intended learning outcomes.

Reviewers should ask: For each programme being reviewed, do the design, content and organisation of the curriculum support the attainment of the ILOs in terms of knowledge, cognitive skills, subject specific skills (including practical/professional skills), key transferable skills, personal development including independent learning and progression to employment and/or further study?

Is the collective expertise of the academic staff suitable and available for effective delivery of the curricula and for the achievement of the ILOs?

Sources of information and evidence will include the SER, subject or programme handbooks and curricular documents, such as course or module handbooks, notes of guidance on practicals, projects and placements, staff CVs and further study and employment statistics.

Review activities will also include evaluation of curricular documents and discussions with staff and students. They should then evaluate the design, content and organisation of the curriculum for the programme(s) in relation to the potential for enabling students to achieve the ILOs. As a result of these activities reviewers should be able to judge whether the intended learning outcomes are adequately supported by the curriculum and the staff profile, and that the curriculum maintains relevance.

5. Evaluation of the breadth, depth and currency of the curricula

Reviewers should ask: Is the curriculum content appropriate, in breadth and depth, to each stage of the programme(s), and to the level of the award(s) and does it secure academic and intellectual progression by imposing increasing demands on the learner, over time, in terms of the acquisition of knowledge and skills, the capacity for conceptualisation, and increasing autonomy in learning?

And also: Is there evidence that curricular content, design and organisation is informed by current research and other scholarly activity, by up-to-date assessments of the labour market, by any changes in relevant occupational or professional requirements and by recent developments in approaches to teaching and learning in the discipline?

Sources of information and evidence will include the SER, programme specification(s), subject or programme handbooks, validation or accreditation documents, and professional and/or statutory body accreditation reports.

Review activities may also include discussions with staff, discussions with professional and/or statutory bodies, and discussions with employers (where relevant and possible). They should then evaluate whether the curricula are appropriate in these respects and whether they are adequately informed by the wider range of academic activities and recent developments in teaching and learning approaches. As a result of these activities reviewers should be able to assess the breadth, depth, and currency of the curricula.

The Subject Review Aide Memoire:
Teaching, Learning and Assessment

Consider the programme specification(s), and identify the relevant aims and ILOs, and statements in the self-evaluation report.

Evaluate the extent to which this aspect contributes to meeting the programme specification(s) with particular reference to the ILOs. Do the ILOs, and the level of attainment of those ILOs through the teaching learning and assessment activities, allow the aims to be met?

1. Evaluation of the organisation of teaching, learning and assessment

Reviewers should ask:
What is the strategy for teaching, learning and assessment? Does it articulate clearly with the programme specification(s) and support the attainment of the ILOs?
Are the programmes of teaching, learning and assessment activities appropriate in terms of the ILOs, in particular the development and assessment of:

- knowledge and understanding
- cognitive skills
- subject-specific skills, including practical/professional skills
- key (transferable) skills
- progression to employment and further study
- personal development including independent learning

Sources of information and evidence includes the SER, internal and external reports, teaching and learning materials, student evaluation questionnaires and meetings with staff, alumni and students, student handbooks, timetables and programmes of teaching and policy documents.

Review activities will invariably the scrutiny of students' work and may also include class observations. The reviewers can then form a judgement on the extent to which there is a coherent approach to teaching, learning and assessment that effectively addresses the ILOs and meets the stated aims.

2. Evaluation of the quality of the teaching by staff and how it supports learning.

Reviewers should ask:

How effective is teaching in relation to curricula content and the programme specification(s)?

How effectively do staff draw upon their research, scholarship or professional activity to inform their teaching?
How good are the materials, including e-learning, provided to support learning?
Is there effective engagement with and participation by students?
Is the quality of teaching maintained and enhanced through effective staff development, peer review of teaching, integration of part-time and visiting staff, effective team teaching and induction and mentoring of new staff?
How effectively is learning facilitated in terms of student workloads?

Sources of information and evidence will include the SER, student questionnaires, internal review documents, staff development documents, subject or programme handbooks, and academic staff appointment documents such as CVs.

Review activities may also include direct observation of teaching and practical workshop sessions, discussions with staff, and discussions with students. As a result of these activities reviewers should be able to make an overall judgement about the quality of teaching and learning opportunities and the extent to which teaching and learning contribute to the achievement of the ILOs. They should then evaluate the overall effectiveness of the teaching and learning activities, including:

- the breadth, depth, pace and challenge of teaching;
- whether there is suitable variety of appropriate teaching methods;
- whether there are suitable opportunities for guided and independent learning by students;
- the effectiveness of the teaching and learning of subject knowledge; and
- the effectiveness of the learning of subject-specific, transferable and practical skills.

3. Evaluation of the assessment process and the academic standards it demonstrates

Reviewers should ask:

Does the assessment process enable learners to demonstrate achievement of the ILOs?
Are there criteria that enable teachers, students, internal and external examiners to distinguish between different levels of achievement?
Does the assessment strategy have an adequate formative function in promoting student learning, and how (e.g. feedback, further reading tasks)?
Can there be full confidence in the objectivity, fairness and transparency of assessment procedures?

Sources of information and evidence will include the SER and programme specification(s), assessment criteria and guidance to markers, external examiners' reports and procedures for monitoring and recording achievement.

Review activities may also include discussions with teaching teams, students and external examiners and the analysis of the methods for recording progress and achievement. They should then evaluate whether the overall assessment process and the particular assessment methods chosen are appropriate and effective. As a result of these activities, reviewers should be able to judge whether assessment processes can adequately measure achievement of the ILOs for the programme and that the process gives confidence in the academic standards attained.

The Subject Review Aide Memoire:
Student Progression and Achievement

Consider the programme specification, and identify the relevant aims and ILOs, and statements in the self-evaluation report.

Evaluate the extent to which this aspect contributes to meeting the programme specification(s). Do the ILOs, and the level of attainment of those ILOs, allow the aims to be met?

1. Evaluation of profile of students

Reviewers should ask:

Does the profile of applications and admissions match the mission and the stated aims in terms of:

- ratio of applications to places
- entry qualifications
- any special features related to the mission, such as profile at entry in relation to the labour market, and regional cross-border recruitment?

Are the rates and trends in student progression and completion satisfactory in terms of:

- progression and non-progression at each stage of the programme (differentiate failure, length of study, withdrawal and transfers in and out)
- completion of the programme
- qualifications awarded (for example, degree results)?

Sources of information and evidence include data on student admissions, induction and progression rates, perhaps with the outcomes of diagnostic assessment. There may be contextual evidence of analyses of trends in the labour market and patterns of recruitment in the region. Staff and students will also provide useful comment on expectations and the quality of information supporting decisions on admission, registration and progression through the programme at each level.

Review activities will include meetings with staff, students and representatives of the employers as well as scrutiny of documentation and data sets. As a result of these activities, reviewers should be able to judge the appropriateness of the profile at entry and in progressive stages through the programme in relation to the programme specification(s) and in particular to the ILOs.

2. Evaluation of student achievement at appropriate academic standards.

Reviewers should ask:

What evidence is there that the standards achieved by students meet the minimum expectations for the award, as measured against the ILOs, relevant reference standards and any other applicable requirements?

Does the range of students' levels of attainment, given the entry profile, confirm that an appropriate proportion of able students demonstrate exceptional achievement?

How is student achievement, including progression to employment/further study, verified?

Sources of information and evidence will include the SER, programme specification(s), external verifiers' or examiners' reports, other reports of professional/validating bodies, where appropriate
employers/professional practitioners, examination board minutes, records of pass rates, the analyses of destination data and satisfaction surveys, and samples of student work. Relevant reference standards will be an important point of reference.

Review activities may also include discussions with teaching teams and the programme leader/group and the examiners. They should then evaluate whether student achievement meets or exceeds the minimum expectations. As a result of these activities, reviewers should be able to judge whether appropriate standards are being marked, achieved and verified.

The Subject Review Aide Memoire: Student Support and Guidance

Consider the programme specification(s), and identify the relevant aims and ILOs, and statements in the self-evaluation report.

Evaluate the extent to which this aspect contributes to meeting the ILOs set. Do the ILOs set, and the level of attainment of those ILOs through the arrangements for support and guidance, allow the aims to be met?

Evaluation of the quality of support and guidance

Reviewers should ask:

Is there an appropriate overall strategy for academic support, including written guidance, which is consistent with the student profile and the overall aims of the provision?
Is there clear written guidance relating to the programme(s) and the support and guidance available?
Are students' needs identified and addressed appropriately through practical arrangements for students' access to tutors and the systematic monitoring of students' progress (SPA)?
Are arrangements made to identify and support students with special learning needs, including outstanding students?
If the language of teaching is not Arabic, do students have an adequate level of skills in the language? Do students receive adequate foreign language support to support their learning (for example, to enable them to access up-to-date textbooks, technical literature, the Internet)?
How effectively is learning facilitated by academic guidance, feedback and supervisory arrangements?
Are students studying off-site or on internships receiving academic support?
Are the arrangements for academic tutorial support clear, effective and generally understood by staff and students?
Are there appropriate arrangements for non-academic support such as personal and welfare considerations?
Are the careers information and guidance well matched to the ILOs and the labour market?

Sources of information and evidence will include subject or programme handbooks, student questionnaires, internal review documents, recruitment data, and progression data.

Review activities may also include discussions with admissions staff, discussions with teaching staff and tutors, and discussions with students. They should then evaluate whether the arrangements in place are effective in supporting students and providing appropriate guidance to successful completion of their programmes. As a result of these activities, reviewers should be able to judge the effectiveness of the student support and guidance, the strategy for student support and the impact they have on the attainment of the ILOs and the stated aims.

The Subject Review Aide Memoire:
Learning Resources

Consider the programme specification, and identify the relevant aims and ILOs, and statements in the self-evaluation report.

Establish student views on learning resources and, where possible, the extent of use by students in the subject. Evidence should be derived in part from completed notes on class observations and students' assessed work (*Annexes H and I*****).***

Evaluate the extent to which this aspect contributes to meeting the programme specification(s). Do the ILOs, and the level of attainment of those ILOs, through the use of available learning resources, allow the aims to be met?

Evaluation of the quality of learning resources and their deployment.

Reviewers should ask:

Is there an overall strategy for the deployment and continuing enhancement of learning resources?
How effectively is learning facilitated in terms of the provision of physical resources?
Is suitable teaching and learning accommodation available?
Are the subject book and periodical stocks appropriate and accessible?
Are suitable equipment and appropriate IT facilities available to learners, including internet and intranet access?
Do students make full use of the available facilities?
Is appropriate technical and administrative support available?

Sources of information and evidence will include equipment lists, library stocks, and internal review documents including internal reports. Where class observations take place, these can be valuable source of information. Discussions with staff and students

Review activities may also include direct observation of accommodation and equipment, discussions with staff, and discussions with students. They should then evaluate the appropriateness of the physical learning resources available and the effectiveness of their deployment. As a result of these activities, reviewers should be able to judge how effectively the available learning resources are deployed in support of the ILOs.

The Subject Review Aide Memoire:
The Effectiveness of Quality Management and Enhancement

Consider the programme specification(s), and identify the relevant aims and ILOs, and statements in the self-evaluation report.

Evaluate the extent to which the systems and processes in place maintain and improve the quality and academic standards of the programme(s) and promote a level of confidence in the academic standards of the academic award(s).

Evaluate the extent to which this aspect contributes to the development of the programme specification(s) and assure the achievement of the ILOs . Do the ILOs set, and the levels of attainment of those objectives through the effectiveness of quality management and enhancement, allow the aims to be met?

Evaluation of the effectiveness of the arrangements for quality management and enhancement

Reviewers should ask:

How effective are the internal arrangements for specifying, monitoring and evaluating the programme(s) provided?
Do these arrangements involve appropriate consideration of:

- national policies and priorities
- the mission of the institution
- the policies, regulations and procedures of the institution
- the use of management information such as internal monitoring data (for example, on the quality of teaching and learning, student satisfaction surveys, student progression and achievement, learning and other support services)
- the views of staff
- the views of students
- the views of other key stakeholders including employers and professional bodies where appropriate
- other internal or external reviews and reports
- professional development needs?

How effective are the processes of self-evaluation and continuing improvement, including:

- the clarity of the programme specification(s) and in particular the ILOs
- the quality of the self-evaluation process and the report
- engagements with the range of key stakeholder groups?
- appraisal and internal peer review of teaching
- a focussed professional development programme
- the contributions of staff in the range of activities such as professional development, scholarship and academic research, community involvement and projects to enhance the provision?

What impact is evident of the quality management and enhancement systems and processes in terms of:

- the use of external reference points to establish and verify academic standards
- the development and application of internal indicators/measures of performance
- the quality of the learning opportunities
- the level of achievement of graduates
- improvement arising from earlier action plans
- continuing review and revision of the programme specification(s)

- taking a strategic view of future plans for enhancement
- the generation and use of internal reports
- the identification and dissemination of good practice
- the identification and implementation of action points required to meet the programme specification more fully and in the spirit of continuing improvement?

Sources of information and evidence will include the annual self-evaluation, other internal and external review documents, policy statements and programmes of professional development (of staff) including any measures of impact, records and analysis of statistical data, arrangements for representation of students, use made of qualitative feedback from students and staff, summary reports of recent surveys, external examiners' reports, professional and/or statutory body accreditation reports, examination board and other committee minutes.

Review activities will include an evaluation of the adequacy of the mechanisms and procedures used and the effectiveness of their implementation by the institution. Reviewers may also include analyses of information, practices and procedures, discussions with teaching teams and discussions with a representative group of graduates, employers and others with an interest.

As a result of these activities reviewers should be able to assess the capacity of the subject provider to apply the institution’s policies, regulations and procedures in line with the mission; maintain and enhance its system and processes of quality assurance; and maintain and enhance the programme(s).

Annex B: Guidelines and Template for Programme Specifications

Introduction

1. The purpose of these guidelines is to assist higher education institutions to prepare a specification for each academic programme in their institution. In the longer term the same structure may be developed to prepare course or module specifications and (with the addition of performance indicators and action planning) to write annual reports on the operation of the programme(s) and its courses. These guidelines draw on good quality assurance practice nationally and internationally in institutions of higher education. The notes and the recommended template for programme specification are developments of documents published by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education in the UK.

2. Programme specifications are an important tool in assuring the quality of education. The programme specification template (attached as **Annex B1**), reflecting this quality assurance function, contains the following main items: basic information about the programme; the educational aims; the intended learning outcomes (ILOs); the external reference points used to confirm the relevance and currency of the ILOs and their equivalence to comparable degree programmes (sometimes referred to as benchmarks); curriculum structure and content; courses (modules) in the programme; a matrix of the skills developed across the various components of the programme; arrangements for student assessment.

3. They should be read and used in conjunction with **Annex A** (the Subject Review Aide-Memoire) and **Annex C** (Guidelines on Self-Evaluation).

4. The Programme Specification template is given in **Annex B1**. In addition, a draft template for course specification to accompany the programme specification is provided in **Annex B2.** This is optional for institutions wishing to develop a comprehensive system.

The function of a programme specification

5. In order to assure the production of graduates according to internationally recognized standards, all institutions need to develop appropriate internal systems to specify the quality of their academic programmes, specify the intended outcomes in terms of the attributes of their graduates, to review and report routinely on their performance against the specification and to take steps to identify matters that need to be addressed as part of a process of continuing improvement. Such action will increase the skills of graduates and enhance their competitive capacity in the national and regional labour market. Hence, it is important to specify each programme according to national and international standards and on the basis of its intended learning outcomes (ILOs). It is also important to prepare an annual report on the performance of the programme during its implementation. This must be done with reference to the standards and benchmarks that are to be carefully chosen by the HE institution in accordance with its mission.

A Guide for the Preparation of Programme Specifications

6. This guide is intended to facilitate a programme team, the school or faculty and the institution, in the development of suitable programme specifications.

7. All programmes being reviewed by arrangement with the HFE will be required to complete a Programme Specification.

8. The template is based on those used in UK universities.

What is a Programme Specification?

'A programme specification is a concise description of the intended outcomes of learning from a higher education programme, and the means by which these outcomes are achieved and demonstrated'

What is the Purpose of a Programme Specification?

A programme specification should facilitate the reader (staff, students and others e.g. employers) to identify:

A. The **intended learning outcomes** (ILOs) of the programme in terms of:

- Knowledge and understanding that a student will be expected to have upon completion
- Key skills: communication, numeracy, the use of IT and learning how to learn
- Cognitive skills, such as understanding of methodologies or ability in critical analysis
- Subject specific skills

B. Information to assist students in their understanding of the:

- teaching & learning methods used to enable outcomes to be achieved
- assessment methods used to enable outcomes to be demonstrated
- relationship of the programme and its study elements to

  - the degree awarded

  - any subsequent professional qualification

  -any career path

To Write a Programme Specification

- Attend a workshop provided by the HFE or the institution
- Use an active programme team or form a working group
- Use the template provided
- Refer to existing written information on the programme including the accreditation requirements and any definitive programme description
- Consult with key members of the institution such as a quality unit or centre and representatives of key stakeholder groups
- Read pages 3-5 in the QAA Guidelines for preparing programme specifications-website address below
- Look at examples in the institution and in the above QAA Guidelines

Guidelines for preparing programme specifications used in the UK may be found at
http://www.qaa.ac.uk/crntwork/progspec/progspec0600.pdf

Creating a programme specification

What follows is a suggested series of Stages and Tasks which a programme team working in groups may wish to follow.

STAGE ONE:

1. What is it about this programme that we want our students to achieve?

This may include …

- subject knowledge and understanding
- a range of intellectual skills, subject specific skills, transferable (key) skills, aesthetic skills etc. etc.
- application of these skills in a range of contexts

Task one: Create some programme outcome statements about our programme, by completing the following sentences

- *This programme is distinctive because it develops …*
- *The most important values, which inform this programme, are…*
- *The academic content of this programme concentrates on…*
- *The most important intellectual skills developed in this programme are…*
- *The most useful practical skills, techniques and capabilities developed are…*
- *Competency will be developed in…*
- *The most important ways a student will learn are…*
- *On completing the programme, we want students to know and understand…*
- *On completing the programme, we want students to be able to…*

STAGE TWO:

2. What reference points can we use to show that which we want students to achieve has relevance and currency within the academic, professional and employing communities?

Task two: Select the relevant reference points and decide how each might be used

- *University mission statement*
- *Measures and Criteria for Accreditation in Jordan*
- *Requirements of professional bodies in Jordan or internationally*
- *Others not listed above but relevant to the programme*

STAGE THREE:

3. Do we know/agree on what it is we want our students to achieve as a result of studying this programme? What are the aims and the intended learning outcomes (ILOs) of the programme as a whole?

Task three - using issues identified in Tasks 1 and 2:

3.1: what do you consider to be the:

- **aims of the programme**
- **ILOs of the programme?**

3.2: Recognise as a whole group that the programme learning outcomes will generally be achieved through the learning outcomes specified for individual modules or courses.

3.3: Consider the design of the modules or courses which make up the programme, bearing in mind that the overall outcomes of the programme also take place in the context of the level or stage of learning that students are at.

3.4: Identify:

- *Where these outcomes will be **found** in the programme*
- *Where these outcomes are **taught/learnt** in the programme*
- *Where these outcomes will be **assessed** in the programme*
- *Consider also how these outcomes **match** your chosen reference points e.g. Benchmarks/ institutional policies and mission e.g. employability skills & curriculum*
- *Consider how these outcomes are **distributed** across the modules and the various **levels/stages** of the programme.*

STAGE FOUR:

4. How would these outcomes be best/most appropriately taught and assessed?

Task Four:
Consider the teaching, study and assessment methods used to promote learning. Some methods are more appropriate than others for developing particular types of learning. Examples are given below. Identify existing good practice in the programme and any weaknesses that should be addressed as part of the development of the specification.

- **Knowledge and understanding** of a subject is often **developed** through lectures and seminars. Such direct teaching methods are usually supported by directed study of textbooks and journal articles (hard copy or electronic), wider reading instigated by the students and by assignment or project work. **Knowledge and understanding** of a subject is often **assessed** through unseen written examinations, but most if not all assessment methods will require some demonstration of knowledge and understanding

- **Intellectual skills** such as analysis, synthesis, evaluation, problem solving may be **practised and demonstrated** through more **active learning** processes involving assignments or projects, group-learning activity such as a seminar or tutorial, laboratory, workshop or field based activity. **Assessment** of **intellectual skills** can utilise unseen written examinations or problem based exercises. Independent project work or research dissertations are typically used to demonstrate capability in a range of intellectual skills linked to the development and application of specialist knowledge, understanding and practical skills.

- **Practical skills** need to be **developed through opportunities to practise** the activity in an appropriate learning context (e.g. in laboratory, field, or workplace placement). Workbooks or guidance manuals may be used to support learning. **Assessment** of competence in exercising a practical skill must involve **practical demonstration** of it.

- **Transferable/ key skills,** that are readily transferable to employment and other contexts, such as communication/teamwork can be **developed** through naturally arising opportunities in the curriculum. For example, written communication skills can be developed and assessed through essays or dissertations; oral communication skills through presentations in seminars; or team-working skills through collaborative projects. Skills may be developed through extra-curricular activities including work experience, student representative work, and social and cultural activities.

STAGE FIVE:

5. Complete the template

Task five:

Use the template to compile and present the whole specification.

STAGE SIX:

6. Create or develop existing course specifications using the programme specification template and exiting documentation. Ensure that all of the programme's ILOs are covered.

Task six:

For each course prepare a course specification that represents the contribution the course makes to the programme. Refer to sections 13 and 18 of the programme specification template to confirm the contribution each course makes. You may wish to develop a template or adopt one based on the B2 template provided here to record the course specifications in a standard format.

STAGE SEVEN:

7. How is the programme specification to be communicated effectively to all with a legitimate interest?

Task seven:
7.1: Review existing programme documentation and website information and clarify the purposes of programme specifications within the institution.
7.2: Develop a strategy for phased implementation if the development of the programme specification has led to material change in the curriculum, such as adjusting the range of student assessment methods.
7.3: Consider the most appropriate form of presentation to the audiences (e.g. staff, visiting professors, students, external evaluators) and prepare a format (e.g. web page or intranet site) to serve the purposes.
7.4: Test the draft for accuracy, consistency and clarity of content and presentation and its accessibility, and then
7.5: Implement.
7.6: Include a review of the programme specification in the next regular internal review to fine tune it and learn from the experience.

Annex B1: Programme Specification Template

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Programme Specification

This Programme Specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if he/she takes full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided.

1. Awarding Institution / Body	
2. Teaching Institution (if different)	
3. School/Faculty and Department/Centre	
4. Title of Final Award	
5. Modes of Attendance offered	
6. External Accreditation and date(s)	
4. Other external references used to verify standards (a) at design stage and (b) at graduation (achievement)	
5. Date of production/revision of this template	
6. Aims of the Programme	
•	
•	
•	
•	
•	
•	
•	

•
•
•

7. Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs), Teaching, Learning and Assessment Methods
A. ILOs for Knowledge and Understanding
e.g. A1. A2. A3. A4.
Teaching and Learning Methods
Assessment methods
B. ILOs for subject-specific skills
e.g. B1. B2. B3. B4.
Teaching and Learning Methods
Assessment methods
C. ILOs for thinking skills
e.g. C1. C2. C3. C4.
Teaching and Learning Methods
Assessment methods
D. ILOs for other skills relevant to employability and personal development
e.g. D1. D2. D3. D4.
Teaching and Learning Methods
Assessment methods

11. Programme Structures*				12. Awards and Credits*
Level	**Module Code**	**Module Title**	**Credit rating**	
Level 4				**Masters Degree** Requires xxx credits at Level 3 or above with a minimum of xxx credits at Level 4
Level 3				**Bachelor Honours Degree** Requires xxx credits including a minimum of xxx at Level 2 and xxx at Level 3 **Bachelor Degree** Requires xxx credits including a minimum of xxx at Level 2 and xxx at Level 3
Level 2				**HE Diploma** Requires xxx credits including a minimum of xxx at Level 2
Level 1				**HE Certificate** Requires xxx credits
Levels A/B/C (FE)				**Certificate of Achievement** Requires a minimum of 20 credits
*** Delete rows not applicable to this Programme Specification**				
13. Personal Development Planning				
14. Admissions criteria				

15. Key sources of information about the programme
•
•
•
•
•

16. Curriculum Skills Map

Please tick in the relevant boxes where individual Programme Learning Outcomes are being asse

				Programme Learning Outcomes								
Level	**Module Code**	**Module/Course Title**	**Core (C) or Option (O)**	**Knowledge and understanding**				**Subject-specific Skills**				**Th**
				A1	A2	A3	A4	B1	B2	B3	B4	C
e.g. LEVEL 3												
e.g. LEVEL 2												
e.g. LEVEL 1												

Note: *Mapping to other external frameworks, e.g. professional/statutory bodies, will be included within Student Handbooks*

Annex B2: Course Specification Template

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Course Specification

This Course Specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the course or module and the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if he/she takes full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided. It indicates the contribution that it makes to the programme(s) and specifies the learning facilities.

1. Course/module title and (if applicable) reference number or code	
2. Programme title(s) and degree title(s) to which the course/module contributes	
3. Credit value	
4. Academic member of staff responsible	
5. Primary language of instruction and assessment	
6. Teaching location (if different from the main campus)	
7. School/Faculty and Department/Centre	
8. Modes of Attendance and Learning	
9. Any other external contributions to learning	
10. Arrangements for routine review and report	

11. Date of production/revision of this template	
12. Aims of the Course/Module	
•	
•	
•	
•	
•	
•	
•	
13. Learning resources	
13.1 Accommodation	
13.2 Course teaching team	
13.3 Additional visiting or occasional professors/speakers	
13.4 Library services	
13.5 Essential core texts	
13.6 Recommended additional texts, journals, wider reading	
13.7 IT and computing facilities	
13.8 Dedicated e-mail address/website	
13.9 Other specialist equipment	

14. Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs), and Teaching, Learning and Assessment Methods
A. ILOs for Knowledge and Understanding
e.g. A1. A2. A3. A4.
Teaching and Learning Methods
Assessment methods
B. ILOs for subject-specific skills
e.g. B1. B2. B3. B4.

Teaching and Learning Methods
Assessment methods
C. ILOs for thinking skills
e.g. C1. C2. C3. C4.
Teaching and Learning Methods
Assessment methods
D. ILOs in other skills relevant to employability and personal development
e.g. D1. D2. D3. D4.
Teaching and Learning Methods
Assessment methods

Annex C: The Self-Evaluation

1. This annex offers guidance on the conduct of self-evaluation and the preparation of the self-evaluation report (SER), including the presentation of statistical data on student progression and achievement.

The process of self-evaluation

2. Self-evaluation is central to quality assurance and to the subject review method. The institution is invited to undertake this as a start to the review process. It will lead to a self-evaluation report (SER). It should be an analytical, evaluative, evidence-based account providing the context in which the programme is offered, the distinctive features and an assessment of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to the effective delivery of the programme. Although it will be strategic in its evaluation, it is also expected to focus on recent, current and prospective students' interests.

3. The process of self-evaluation brings a number of benefits. These include:

The clarification of the aims, an improved specification of the programme(s) under review,
The sharing of insights by staff and others with an interest in the quality and standards of the programme(s) into its nature and distinctive features
The organisation of evidence such as performance indicators.

4. Those with a legitimate interest in the educational programmes (the key stakeholders) include the academic staff, visiting professors and others engaged in the learning and assessment such as supervisors of internships and external evaluators, other staff in the institution who make a contribution to the programme (such as librarians), the students, alumni and representatives of the employing community. A self-evaluation process should ideally capture the structured comments of all these interests.

5. The process requires considerable planning and organisation in the institution and should lead not only to a self-evaluation report that will form the basis of an external review but also to the sustainable development of internal quality assurance processes. The facilitator can play an important role in supporting this process. Institutions may also wish to consider nominating from the outset a "critical friend" as a reader of the draft self-evaluation report to assist the department or faculty /school in producing a clear, comprehensive and concise report that is fit for purpose.

The Self-Evaluation Report (SER)

6. The self-evaluation is the subject provider's evaluation of the quality of the student learning experience and the level of the students' achievements expressed in terms of the academic standards attained. Performance is measured against its own aims and the intended learning outcomes (ILOs) as determined by the institution using appropriate external reference points. Consequently, the SER needs to include a clear statement of the programme'(s) aims and ILOs (contained in a programme specification for each programme being evaluated – please refer to **Annex B** of this Handbook) together with an evaluation of the programme(s) of study designed to meet them. The evaluation is organised within the structure given by the aspects of provision, and should be supported by evidence.

7. Generally, the SER will be written for the subject review arranged with the HFE and should address the programme(s) being presented for external review.

8. The SER should discuss both strengths and weaknesses in the provision. Where weaknesses are acknowledged, the self-evaluation should include discussion of the actions planned and taken to improve academic standards and the quality of the programme.

9. As a rough indication of length, the SER, excluding the programme specification(s) and annexes, should not exceed 5,000 words and the Framework section (see below) should not exceed 800 words. It should be presented as a word document in electronic format in not less than a 10-point font and sufficient hard copies in print supplied to the visiting reviewers, the interpreter and the facilitator in the base room.

Timetable for the submission of the self-evaluation

10. The stages given in weeks before the site-visit are approximate and based on the minimum desirable. Where feasible, the HFE will work in partnership with the institutions to provide as much lead-time as possible.

11. The normal timetable for self-evaluation leading to an external review is as follows:

Stage 1: Consultations in the higher education community on the scope of a proposed subject review programme: 40 weeks
Stage 2: Workshop for representatives of institutions participating in a subject review programme: 30 weeks
Stage 3: HFE confirms submission date for SER with the institution: 28 weeks
Stage 4: Institution prepares an action plan for the self-evaluation process: 28 weeks
Stage 5: Institution begins self-evaluation and in parallel prepares or refines its relevant programme specification(s): 26 weeks
Stage 6: HFE confirms date of site-visit and details of the visiting review team: 10 weeks
Stage 7: Institution submits its self-evaluation report to the HFE: 8 weeks
Stage 8: The review chair appointed by the HFE to lead the external review contacts the institution to arrange details of the site-visit and offers an analysis of the SER together with any necessary points for clarification: 4 weeks.
Stage 9: The reviewers prepare their initial commentaries on the SER and circulate them in the review team and with the facilitator: 1 week
Stage 10: Site visit commences. The institution may wish to offer any essential update on developments since the SER was submitted that have direct and substantial relevance for the review.

Use of the Self-Evaluation

12. The SER informs and shapes the activities of the review team during the subject review visit. Reviewers test the rigour of the self-evaluation and the extent to which it presents an accurate picture of the academic standards and the quality of education that students on the programme(s) receive. Reviewers report on the rigour and openness of the self-evaluation, and the steps taken to improve the academic standards and quality of programme(s), under the Effectiveness of Quality Management and Enhancement aspect.

13. An analysis of the self-evaluation determines the balance of the reviewers' activities. It informs and shapes the activities of the review team, but does not limit the scope of their enquiry. Reviewers may develop independent lines of enquiry in the light of the evidence gathered during the visit.

Structure of the Self-Evaluation Report (SER)

14. The SER should include three main sections:

a. The Framework containing the programme specification(s).
b. The Evaluation of the academic standards and the quality of the learning opportunities.
c. The Annexes.

a. The Framework

15. The Framework provides the context for the educational programmes that are being evaluated, a brief summary of the scale of the provision and the relevant programme specification(s). It will form the basis of the Introduction to the subject review report and be essentially factual and contextual. The main contents of the framework are:

1) A title page should clearly indicate the subject review (e.g. Law), institution, faculty/school and department in which the programme(s) under review are located, and the date.

2) The Mission Statement of the Institution

3) A summary of the main educational aims of the subject being reviewed

4) A full list of the academic programmes provided in the subject, together with a clear indication of the programme(s) which are included in the self-evaluation and those which are to be in scope of the external subject review.

5) An indication of the scale of the provision, in the context of the University using the following data for the most recent academic year on the student and staff profile should be included:
   - number of students in the institution
   - number of students (all years) on each programme in the subject, the number enrolled in the most recent year 1 and the number of graduates in the most recent graduation
   - number of HE academic staff employed by the institution, by grade
   - number of HE academic staff contributing to the programme(s) under review by grade
   - number of non-academic support staff supporting the programmes under review, including technical, administrative, clerical and IT staff.

16. In addition, the institution may wish to provide a factual explanation of the context in which the programme(s) are provided. This will involve consideration of the Mission of the University and how the work of the faculty/school contributes to the achievement of that mission through the programme(s) which it provides. There might also be some consideration of how the aims and ILOs of the programme(s) support this contribution. It is useful in this context for the institution to give the precise location of the programme(s) under review (e.g. the department).

17. The programme specification(s) should then be either inserted in the text or cross-referenced to another word document that should accompany the SER. The programme specification(s) should be presented using the template in **Annex B1** or an equivalent structure.

b. The Evaluation of the Quality of Education

18. This section should contain the subject provider's evaluation, with supporting evidence, of the academic standards achieved by students compared to the stated aims and ILOs that are confirmed by the institution using appropriate external reference points, and the quality of the education provided for students, measured against these stated aims and ILOs. The evaluation should be set out in the structure provided by the six aspects of provision, namely:

Curriculum Design, Content and Organisation
Teaching, Learning and Assessment

Student Progression and Achievement
Student Support and Guidance
Learning Resources
The Effectiveness of Quality Management and Enhancement.

19. Information on the key features and relationships for each aspect of provision is provided in the Subject Review Aide Memoire (**Annex A**).

c. The Annexes

20. The SER may include annexes to provide more detail as well as statistical information.

21. Details of students' progression and achievement are required and should include the following data for the three most recent cohorts for each programme.

- analysis of entry qualifications
- number and percentage of students passed and failed at the end of each year/semester
- number and percentage of withdrawals
- number and percentage of transfers in and out of the programme(s)
- number and percentage of entrants completing the programme(s)
- number and percentage of qualifications awarded (for example, certificate, diploma and degree results, including classifications where relevant)
- number and percentage of graduate destinations (employment and further study).

22. For the effectiveness of the programme(s) in contributing to the Mission of the University and faculty/school to be reviewed, there should be an analysis of the destinations of graduates. This should include an analysis of the statistics of students entering 'appropriate' employment or further education either within the subject area studied, or outside the subject area, but in 'appropriate graduate level' employment.

23. Other annexes may provide more detailed information on the steps taken to engage with key stakeholder groups such as the arrangements to survey and analyse levels of satisfaction.

Annex D: Peer Review
Introduction

1. Peer review is an essential part of most quality assurance systems. It forms the basis of the published method used by Al Hussein Fund for Excellence (HFE) in Jordan. This annex summarises the characteristics of peer review and sets out the criteria for the appointment of reviewers, the personal specification for reviewers and review chairs and criteria for the composition of review teams.

2. Review by peers means that the institution has a reasonable expectation that the visiting reviewers should hold, or have recently held, equivalent professional positions as those with whom they conduct their enquiries in the institution. They should have the confidence of the institution and, when offering professional opinion on their area of expertise, they are credible in the eyes of the institution. Peer review also offers safety in numbers for the process, in that the team as a whole provides a degree of protection for the institution and the HFE from one person's eccentric views.

3. The effective contribution of peer reviewers is underpinned by the application of criteria for their appointment, equal opportunities for all reviewers, experience of the same training and support in the quality assurance and accreditation process. In addition, the specification for the composition of review teams offers transparency to the process of arranging reviews. The HFE will make appropriate arrangements to monitor the reviews to satisfy itself and the institution that the peer review process respects the published method and protocols.

Recruitment, Training and Visit Allocation

4. Reviewers are introduced to the HFE by the QAA in the UK which recruits and trains all reviewers in line with standard operating procedures and published criteria to ensure that they make an effective contribution to the process. The HFE makes appointments of reviewers based on the assessment of the needs of the review programme and the recommendations of the advisor on behalf of the QAA. The HFE also provides specific briefing for reviewers. The criteria for appointment are:

- All reviewers actively engaged in the schedule of engagements meet the specification (see below)
- All reviewers allocated to a review have successfully completed the training
- Reviewers are provided with the *Subject Review Handbook* together with supporting materials and guidelines
- Reviewers will be allocated to reviews that are within their competence
- Reviewers will make themselves available for the whole of the scheduled review
- Reviewers will not be assigned to a review where either they or the institution believe there to be a potential conflict of interest (see below, Composition of a Team))
- Reviewers take a professional interest in the process and the advancement of academic affairs.

Personal Specification

5. Reviewers need to have sufficient status and reputation for their views to be respected in the academic community. They also need to bring to the process a high order of skills in communication and evaluation. All candidates for the role of reviewer will be invited to submit a CV. The HFE will give the reviewer a contract in the form of terms of reference.

6. The following points represent a core specification:

Essential

- Academic expertise in one or more discipline that appears in the schedule for review
- Current or recent academic experience including successful teaching practice and at least five years teaching and/or research within the last ten years, or
- Those in professional practice in a relevant discipline who have recent, direct experience of academic activity may also be considered
- Current or recent experience in quality management and improvement projects or systems which have made an impact
- Proven abilities in communications in English including: listening; joining group discussion; respecting the views of others; leading (chairing) group discussion; rapid reading with understanding; and concise clear writing to tight deadlines
- Competence in the use of and interpretation of number including: the accurate analysis of data sets; verification and reconciliation techniques; presentation of valid data in support of a judgement
- Proven ability in evaluation including: appraisal of the context; identifying logical or irrational argument; making sound judgements based on facts; adjusting judgements in the light of additional information or well-argued alternative views in a professional context; and a willingness to justify judgements.

Desirable

- A favourable disposition to initiatives to improve the quality and academic standards of higher education
- IT skills, including the use of laptops or notebooks, internet and intranet. Preferably in MS word
- Current or recent experience in moderation of marking, external examining and/or formal validation of graduate attainment
- Effective practice in curricular developments, including the writing of outcome-related curricula documents, action plans for programme/course improvements or strategies for learning, teaching and assessment
- Acknowledged track record in research and other scholarly activities
- Recognised contributions to society or the community within the normal range of academic activities (e.g. projects, consultancy, teaching, coaching or mentoring)
- Advisory or interventionist functions as internal or external consultant or change agent in higher education or related professional fields.

Review Chairs

7. Review chairs will meet all the above requirements, except that relevant academic activity in the discipline under review is not always required, and in addition will need to demonstrate:

- Recent experience in internal and/or external review methods
- Proven qualities of leadership and the management of people and information in task groups or projects
- Abilities to implement procedures and protocols consistently yet fairly to accommodate local circumstances
- Effective chairing of reviews and meetings including thorough planning, collaboration with other key participants and time management
- Ability to assess the evidence available and the validity of emerging judgements
- Ability to write cogently to deadlines and edit the writing of reviewers to meet the specification for the review report
- Ability to evaluate the review and make constructive suggestions for the continuing improvement of the method
- On request, additional contributions to the process through, for example, conferences, editing the review reports generated by others, trawling reports in order to draft overview or summary reports, and the preparation of materials for briefing reviewers and institutions.

Composition of a review team

8. The HFE will compose each review team for each review, taking advice from its appointed consultant in the subject review programme. The HFE will consult with the institution and will inform it of the proposed composition prior to its confirmation. However, the final allocation of reviewers is made by the HFE to ensure the independence of the review process.

9. The key criteria for the composition of the team are as follows:

- Teams are composed of reviewers who meet the above requirements
- The minimum number of reviewers will be two plus a review chair. The size of the team will vary according to the scale and complexity of the academic programme(s)
- The team will be led by a review chair who may or may not have relevant expertise in the discipline
- The profile of the team reflects the profile of the main academic activities of the programme(s) being reviewed
- The team cannot cover every specialist teaching and research interest, but the HFE, guided by the institution, will seek to provide a balance of interests in the principal academic activities
- Where appropriate, a team may include a reviewer from professional practice
- Potential conflicts of interest in the team will be avoided, and the HFE will seek the cooperation of reviewers and the institution to this end.

Annex E: Preparations for the site visit including documentation to be provided by the Institution

Making Introductions

1. Al Hussein Fund for Excellence (HFE) will arrange with the institution to establish the names and roles of key representatives of the institution and the faculty/school and department directly involved in the subject review. It will provide the institution with the names and e-mail addresses of the members of the subject review team. It will introduce the principal parties to each other by e-mail. The review chair will normally contact the named representative in the faculty/school who is leading the arrangements for the subject review not later than four weeks before the site-visit.

Preliminary discussions by e-mail

2. The review chair will:

- introduce him/herself to the named representative and to the institutional facilitator
- offer feedback on the self-evaluation report, based on an analysis, which may include suggesting that the institution supplies additional information
- request a website reference to access essential contextual information equivalent to a printed prospectus
- arrange with the representative a suitable outline schedule of activities for the site visit based on annex F and fine-tuned to local circumstances
- confirm logistical arrangements for the site visit including daily travel, the base room, the range of supporting documentation to be available, and other details such as access to a web terminal, printer and photocopier
- agree the sample of student work to be available in the base room
- offer advice as requested on matters such as the review method, the role of the facilitator and who should be invited to meetings.

Documentation to be provided by the Institution

3. The following items in English should be sent to the review team six weeks in advance of the visit and printed duplicate copies of this material should also be provided in the base room for each reviewer and the interpreter/translator:

- a copy of the self-evaluation report (SER) including the programme specification(s)
- a supplement if necessary containing updated information; for example, the student intake and progression data for the most recent cohort
- the main subject information provided for students (for example, subject/course handbook) or the website reference.

4. In addition the following documents should be available in the base room:

- internal reports on the programme
- if they are in use, external examiners' reports and accreditation reports for the programme(s) for the three last years, with guidelines and protocols for external examiners where these are used
- teaching/learning timetables for each programme for the period of the visit
- HE academic staffing list and brief CV profile (giving main teaching/research interests and administrative responsibilities)
- internal subject reports for the last three years
- The summary reports of the outcomes of recent student satisfaction surveys and any similar surveys of alumni and employers
- minutes of relevant meetings

- module or course specifications or equivalent outlines and relevant associated documentation (for example, booklists), typically for the core modules and a range of specialist options for the programme(s)
- any supporting, additional evidence relating to each aspect, to exemplify and support statements made in the self-evaluation.

Student Work

5. This should typically include a sample of the work of the most recently assessed cohort for:

- each level and year of study
- the core modules, units or courses and a range of specialist options for each programme of study
- a representative range of attainment/marks
- a range of assessment methods, for example continuous assessments/coursework; practical/laboratory work and projects; videotapes and artefacts; and examination scripts, essays and dissertations.

6. Question papers, marking and feedback sheets, and assessment criteria (where they are in use) should accompany the samples.

Annex F: Typical outline schedule for site-visit of 2.5 days

1. This outline schedule is offered as a basic model suitable for adapting to local circumstances. The review chair will agree an outline with the departmental representative prior to the site-visit. Times may change, and all such timetables need to be flexible. If the President of the Institution wishes, the team will be happy to meet him or his representative at any convenient time. It is sometimes possible to arrange the introductory meeting late in the afternoon or the day before day 1 (day 0). The institution may also wish to pre-arrange some key meetings that will take time to set up such as the meeting with past students and employers. The priorities for lines of enquiry and the best use of time will be discussed at the first review team meeting. The two versions are arranged to serve a site-visit that starts at 0830 on day 1, and a site visit that is scheduled to start midday.

2. The team may wish to observe a small number of classes (about 3). It would welcome suggestions with regard to suitable classes. A final decision regarding class observations will be addressed at the first meeting to finalise the agenda.

3. With the exception of meetings with students (past and present) and employers, and the private meeting of the team at the end of the third day, the IF is invited to every meeting.

Day 1 0830	Meeting between reviewers, Departmental Representative and Institutional Facilitator (IF) to finalise the agenda for the review; discussion of any practical questions;	½ hour
0900 - 1100	Meeting on Academic Standards with all faculty. This will include aims, ILOs, use of external reference points, curriculum, assessment, student progression and achievement.	2 hours
1115 – 1215	Meeting with current undergraduate students (20-30)	1 hour
1215 – 1300	Tour of Learning Resources	¾ hour
1300	Light working lunch for team in base room	
1300-1700	The team will want to read the documentation in the base room and may wish to meet some faculty or other staff for discussion. They may wish to observe some classes	4 hours
1700-1800	Team Meeting, with IF present	1 hour
Day 2 08.00	Meeting between reviewers, Dept Rep and IF to finalise the days activities	½ hour
0900 - 1100	Meeting with faculty on Quality of Learning Opportunities. This will include teaching, learning, student support and guidance, and all aspects of resources	2 hours
1115 - 1215	Meeting with staff on Effectiveness of Quality Management and Enhancement	1 hour
1300 - 1400	Light lunch for team with past students (alumni) and employers (if possible)	1 hour
1400 - 1700	The team will want to read the documentation in the base room and may wish to meet some faculty or other staff for discussion. They may wish to observe some classes.	3 hours
1700 - 18.00	Team meeting with IF present, including identification of any significant gaps in the evidence base and agree agenda for the next	2 hours

	meeting	
Day 3 0830-1030	Clarification meeting with reviewers and all Faculty followed by team writing the key points emerging.	Up to 2 hours (1 hour may be sufficient for the meeting)
1030-1100	Final collation of evidence and any further clarification in ad hoc meeting	½ hour
1100-1200	Private meeting of the team, no University staff will be present to finalise conclusions and feedback	1 hour
1200-1230	Oral feedback of major strengths and weaknesses to Computing staff/University.	½ hour

Day 1 1430	Meeting between reviewers, Departmental Representative and Institutional Facilitator to finalise the agenda for the review; discussion of any practical questions	15 –30 minutes
1500 -1630	Meeting on Academic Standards with all faculty. This will include aims, use of reference points, ILOs, curriculum, assessment, progression and achievement	1.5 hours
1630 -1730	Meeting with current undergraduate students (20-30)	1 hour
1730-1815	Tour of Learning Resources	¾ hour
1815-1915	Team meeting with IF present	1 hour
Day 2 08.30	Meeting between reviewers, Dept Rep and IF to finalise the days activities	½ hour
0900 - 1100	Meeting with faculty on Quality of Learning Opportunities. This will include teaching, learning, student support and guidance, and all aspects of resources	2 hours
1115 - 1200	Meeting with CS staff on Quality Management and Enhancement	1 hour
1300 - 1400	Light lunch for team with past students and employers (if possible)	1 hour
1215-1300 1400-1700	The team will want to read the documentation in the base room and may wish to meet some faculty or other staff for discussion. We may wish to observe some classes	4 hours
17.00-1800	Team Meeting, with IF present	1 hour
Day 3 08.30	Meeting between reviewers, Dept Rep and IF to finalise the days activities	½ hour
0900-0930	Further reading and writing and possible ad hoc meeting in response to emerging lines of enquiry	½ hour
1000-1300	The team will want to read the documentation in the base room and may wish to meet some faculty or other staff for discussion. We may wish to observe some classes	3 hours
1300-1400	Team meeting with IF present to review evidence base, identify any significant gaps and agree agenda for next meeting	1 hour
1400-1600	Clarification meeting with all Faculty followed by team writing key emerging points	Up to 2 hours (1 hour may be

		sufficient for the meeting)
1600-1700	Private meeting of the team, no University staff will be present, to finalise conclusions and key points for feedback	1 hour
1700-1730	Oral feedback of major strengths and weaknesses to staff/University.	½ hour

Annex G: Protocol and Prompts for Meetings between Reviewers and Students during Reviews

Purpose and conduct of meetings

1. The views of students represent an important part of the evidence collected by the review process. The reviewers will be seeking to focus on key points emerging from their reading of the self-evaluation report and supporting information. They will wish to reflect on the expressed views following the meeting and consider the full range of information when making their judgements.

2. The list of prompts below should be used to plan the meeting beforehand and the lines of enquiry should be selective, based on the self-evaluation report and information emerging earlier in the review site-visit. The meeting should not normally take longer than 60 minutes. One of the review team will take notes of the areas addressed and the responses. In the notes, comments will be generalised, recognising alternative views, and not ascribed to individuals.

3. The meeting should be pre-arranged to include a representative group of students across all levels with a range of modules within the educational programme. When more than one programme is being reviewed, the review chair will arrange with the departmental representative and the facilitator an appropriate representation either within one meeting or in separate meetings. The meeting may include members of students' councils, but should not be "packed" with politically active students. The review chair normally chairs the meeting. The ideal numbers are approximately 20. The institutional facilitator and members of staff of the faculty should not attend.

4. Where practicable, the language should be English but, with the general agreement of those present, detailed points may be better expressed in Arabic and these should be briefly translated for the benefit of all reviewers. Dialogue should be constructive and should avoid personalising criticism of staff. Questions from reviewers should be open and unbiased. One apparently extreme opinion may be checked out around the whole group for a consensus or dissention. The review team may decide to break a large group into smaller groups after the Introduction, with one reviewer leading each.

Structure of meeting

Introduction

The review chair will introduce the visiting reviewers and provide a brief summary of the purposes of the visit and the review method. Ideally they should have already seen a copy of this agenda. Students should be invited to introduce themselves by name, programme, year/level and reasons for choosing programme/institution.

Have any students present been involved in the institution's annual review and reporting process recently, or the preparation of the self-evaluation report (possibly known to them as self-study) (see also final section below)?

Curriculum and standards (intended outcomes, curriculum, assessment, progression and achievement)

Reasons for choosing the programme
Clarity of stated aims, intended learning outcomes and what is assessed when.
Match between curriculum and expectations (for example, flexibility, choice and content).
Relevance of the curriculum (knowledge and skills) to prospective career/further study.
Any examples of exposure to current or recent research and professional practice via staff in the institution.
Opportunities for practical, vocational experience, internship and projects where appropriate.
Student timetable and workload.
Sense of challenge and/or achievement of intended learning outcomes.

Perceptions of added-value (gain in knowledge and skills, with particular reference to sustainable or independent learning and new insights).

Teaching and Learning
Range of teaching and learning methods experienced
Students' views on quality of teaching
Course materials, including learning packs
Guidance and support for independent study

Support and guidance
Admission and induction procedures
Quality of written information and guidance on the programme
Access to tutors and arrangements for academic and personal advice
Support during periods of practice, study abroad, internships and other off-site experience
Facilities for disabled and distinguished students
Feedback on assessed work
Quality of information given to students on their progress and any areas that may require additional study
Match of careers advice and guidance to career aspirations.

Learning Resources
For all this section, how well are they USED? (For example, is there an insistence that learning tasks and assessed assignments have to demonstrate their use?)
Library services (opening hours, practical access, and user support, availability of stock – standard texts, journals and wider reading) and do you USE them?
IT provision (opening hours, practical access, searching, user support, availability of terminals, internet and intranet, e-mailing) and do you USE them?
Specialist equipment, including relevant software – and do you USE it?
Teaching halls, including laboratory or studio provision
Recreational facilities – and do you USE them?
Space for study, or other independent learning, including practical projects, common rooms, refectory, social areas – and do you USE them?

Effectiveness of Quality Management and Enhancement
Ways in which students' views are sought and frequency
Representation on council or committees
The degree to which students' views is influential, with examples of action, impact and feedback
Students' contribution to the self-evaluation report
In brief, in the students' view, what works (strengths), what should be improved, and are they confident that the quality management process captures these features?

Conclusion
Students should be given the opportunity to raise points not covered by the Reviewers' questions
The review chair will thank the students for their contribution.

Annex H: Protocol for Class Observation and class observation form

Purposes of class observation

1. Teaching and learning in classes lie at the heart of educational programmes. Peer review can make a significant contribution to the enhancement of the quality of education when applied effectively to the evaluation of teaching and learning. As part of the review process, both for internal quality assurance and for the external reviews arranged by the HFE, reviewers may wish to observe a sample of classes and evaluate the contribution they make to the attainment of the stated intended learning outcomes (ILO). The integrity of teaching and learning in classes should be highly valued and reviewers need to be sensitive to the possible impact of intervention. Any observation of classes must respect this integrity and follow the protocol set out in this annex.

2. The purpose of observing classes is to collect evidence by direct observation of the quality of the teaching and learning and to draw reasonable inferences on, for example, the appropriateness of the teaching methods and the classroom facilities. The purpose is <u>not</u> to appraise the performance of academic staff. Any evaluations made will not be personalised nor over-generalised. When inferences are drawn from a sample of classes, these should be checked against other sources of evidence such as annual reports and discussions with academic staff and students.

Peer review in internal systems

3. As part of the development of internal systems for quality assurance, institutions may wish to develop suitable processes and protocols for peer review of teaching and learning. This protocol may assist them. Any internal peer review of teaching and learning should have a clear purpose that distinguishes between, on the one hand staff appraisal systems (where information on staff performance is gathered and used to inform management decisions on performance, rewards and needs for further staff development) and, on the other hand peer review processes that give insights into current practice, effectiveness and potential for enhancement. The outcomes of internal peer review may be used as part of the evidence base in quality assurance systems but, when presented or summarised for self-evaluation reports or for external review, the information should not identify individual staff or students by name.

Peer review in external reviews

4. For external reviews arranged by the HFE the visiting peer reviewers will determine the need for, and the number of classes in the sample for, class observation after considering their preliminary reading of the documentation and their initial written commentaries. The time available for observations is limited and the visiting reviewers have many calls upon their time during a site-visit. If the institution is able to present summative evidence of the outcomes of class observations undertaken as part of earlier internal review, this evidence can be helpful to the visiting reviewers. They may be able to reduce the size of their sample of observations to a degree that allows confirmation or verification of the outcomes of the internal review. The institution will need to make available to reviewers a schedule of classes. It can expect to be consulted at an early stage of a site visit on the sample of classes that is of interest to the reviewers and on the practical considerations such as the language of instruction, accessibility or any special sensitivity.

Sampling

5. The range of classes available should be considered together with the programme and course specifications when identifying a sample for observation. Large and small group teaching, practical sessions and workshops, directed individual learning, the application of skills and distance learning may be included. Internships will not normally be included in the sample.

Evaluation

6. Reviewers will evaluate: the clarity of the classes' stated objectives and their relationship with the intended learning outcomes stated in the course and programme specifications; the extent to which the class contributes to the specifications; the appropriateness of the selected teaching methods and the levels of participation by the students; the effectiveness of the teaching of subject knowledge, including references to wider reading and to recent and current research or professional activity; the effectiveness of the development of relevant subject-specific, transferable and practical skills; and the appropriateness of the facilities (accommodation, equipment, use of texts and other teaching aids). It is not expected that all of these will be on display in every class.

Good practice

7. Before observing a class, the peer reviewer should read any existing background information, such as the course and programme specifications and the student or course handbook, and meet the lecturer briefly for up to about 10 minutes. The purpose of this preparation is to establish the context for the class, its place in the sequence of the teaching programme, its objectives, and the lecturer's intentions for the chosen methods of teaching and learning. At this meeting, the reviewer should also confirm that the lecturer understands the protocol and in particular the purpose of the observation.

8. The peer reviewer will not normally attend a class for less than 45 minutes or for more than one hour. In the case of a long session of up to three hours, the reviewer may arrange with the lecturer to attend in short spells at the beginning, middle and end. The reviewer is strictly an observer and in no circumstances should intervene or take part in any way in the teaching or group activity.

9. The reviewer may arrange with the lecturer to hold a brief discussion (not more than a few minutes) shortly afterwards in a private place to share reflections on the effectiveness of the class. The discussion can clarify any points that arise and will provide an opportunity for the member of staff conducting the class to offer a self-evaluation of the effectiveness of the session if they wish.

10. The reviewer should complete a record for the class observation shortly afterwards, using the standard observation note below.

The use made of the evaluation

11. The evaluation made by the reviewer will form part of the evidence base for the review, in due proportion to the size of the sample and the time devoted to class observations as a fraction of the whole review schedule. The evaluation will be considered within the review team, but will not be divulged to the institution. The institution should not seek to use the evidence base from class observations as a means to appraise staff performance.

Observation note (For use in all teaching and learning sessions – including lectures, tutorials, practicals and students' independent learning sessions)
Institution **Programme** **Subject /course** **Reviewer** **Date/session/time**
Length of observation (minutes)
Level/year/mode, e.g. FT/PT **Number of Students present**
Type of activity, e.g. lecture, practical
Are the learning objectives planned for this session clear and are they appropriate to the ILOs for the course and the programme? (e.g. knowledge and understanding, key skills, cognitive skills, and subject-specific, including practical/professional skills)?
Are the teaching methods and range of activities appropriate?
Is the content appropriate for the ILOs and to the level of study? (Knowledge and skills development in terms of currency, accuracy, relevance, use of examples, level, match to student needs)
Do the opportunities for the students to participate match the programme specification's expressed aims to develop independent learning?
Are the facilities appropriate and are they used effectively? (Accommodation, equipment, use of websites, texts and other teaching aids)
Please summarise the session's overall effectiveness in contributing to (i) the learning objectives for the class and (ii) the programme and course specifications: **(e.g. indicate:- appropriate in meeting the ILOs; ineffective; matters that should be enhanced; example of good practice)**
Please indicate relevance to other aspects:

CDCO	**TLA**	**SPA**	**SSG**	**LR**	**EQME**

Annex I: Student Work Review Note

Institution……………………………..................................
Programme……………………………………………….
Reviewer ....
Date.................................
Subject ....
Module/Course title ....
Level/Year of study ....
Number of items of work in the sample............................
Relation of the sample to the spread of student marks for the course ....
Nature of student work:
Essay ....
Examination Script ....
Lab or Workshop Project ....
Other (please specify) ....

1. Academic Standards: does the assessment match intended learning outcomes for the module/programme; are the standards set appropriate to the level of study; do they reflect any accreditation or other external reference points such as professional requirements?

Grade

2. Student Achievement: are the intended learning outcomes appropriately achieved at the level indicated by the grade/class awarded?

Grade

3. Quality Assurance and Staff Input: are the marking criteria clear and consistently applied; is there evidence of moderation of marking; is the quality of the feedback appropriate?

Grade

4. Overall Comments: identify in particular, and indicate in boxes below, any evidence that relates to academic standards (CDCO and SPA), quality of learning opportunities (TLA, SSG and LR) and the effectiveness of quality management and enhancement (EQME).

Overall Grade

Academic Standards CDCO/SPA	**TLA**	**SSG**	**LR**	**EQME**

Annex J: Meeting Note

Institution……………………………..................................
Programme(s)…………………………………….……………
Meeting/aspect ……………………………………………….
Persons attending …………………………………………….

Reviewer(s) attending ....
Date.................................
Time start/finish ……………
Recorder ……………………

Lead questions/issues	Responses

Conclusions

Follow up points
1. Used references to source material e.g. SER

2. Cross reference to other meetings/sources of evidence

3. Matters for further exploration

Circulation to:

Annex K: Review Team Meetings Agenda
Review Team Meeting
Day One - Afternoon

Typical Agenda

1. Introductions, including clarification of agreed roles and the respective responsibilities of review chair, subject specialist reviewers, institutional facilitator and interpreter/translator.

2. Reminder of review method:

- evaluate the degree of success in attaining the subject provider's aims and the ILOs as set out in the programme specification
- evidence needed to support judgements
- criteria for assigning grades.

3. Consideration of subject specialist reviewers' division of responsibility. Reminders to:

- share evidence with appropriate colleagues: agree the mechanisms
- use Subject Review Handbook for guidance, including Subject Review Aide Memoire (**Annex A**)

4. Identification of issues to be pursued:

- key points arising from the reading of the self-evaluation report
- discussion of brief initial commentaries prepared by reviewers
- priorities for lines of enquiry
- use of the outline schedule of activities and any fine-tuning necessary
- discussion of process of developing written summaries.

5. Strategy to be adopted to ensure appropriate coverage of student work, and consideration of need for a sample of class observations. Reminders and discussion of:

- protocol for observation and feedback to teaching staff
- use of Observation Note (**Annex H**) and Student Work and Assessment Note (**Annex I**).

6. Meetings with staff, current and former students, and others. Reminders to:

- use of Subject Review Aide Memoire (**Annex A**) and Aide Memoire for Meeting with Students (**Annex G**)
- keep, use and circulate notes of meetings.

7. Review programme for the following day:

- agree coverage of meetings
- agree coverage of class observations
- agree review of student work and supporting documentation
- time and location of team meeting(s).

8. Logistics:

- transport, security of base room, administrative support, drinks and meals, photocopying and use of telephone
- procedures for requesting additional documentation and making appointments with staff.

9. AOB.

Review Team Meeting
Day Two – Early Evening

Typical Agenda

1. Discussion of the day's activities. Review evidence gathered:

- any class observations
- meetings held and information gathered: summary of key points shared with team
- coverage of programmes/courses/modes/levels
- sampled student work and other documentation read
- issues to be tracked further in relation to each aspect of provision.

2. Consideration of the quality of the self-evaluation report.

3. Review evidence gathered in relation to each aspect of provision. Share written summaries of evidence. Give initial consideration to the appropriate grading for each aspect, identifying where additional information and/or clarification is required.

Curriculum Design, Content and Organisation
Teaching, Learning and Assessment
Student Progression and Achievement
Student Support and Guidance
Learning Resources
Effectiveness of Quality Management and Enhancement

4. Review programme for the following day:

- agree coverage of meetings
- agree review of student work and external examiners' reports
- agree any further coverage of observations
- time and location of team meeting(s).

5. Arrangements for production of reviewers' written summaries of evidence and for the tabling of first drafts of evidence and judgements at the next team meeting.

6. AOB.

Review Team Meeting
Day Three

Typical Agenda
The institutional facilitator does not attend this meeting.

1. Summary of evidence gathered. Recap on the coverage of the previous evening and any new evidence. Debate on the quality of education provided in relation to subject aims the level of achievements in relation to the ILOs:

- agree conclusions
- finalise grading of each aspect of provision (subject to verification afterwards – not announced in the oral feedback).

2. Arrangements for the oral feedback:

- issues to be presented
- conduct of meeting.

3. Timescale for the production of the subject review report. Importance of returning comments on draft report.

4. Arrangements for:

- clearing the base room
- returning documents and keys to institution
- collation of documentation to be retained by the review chair
- removal or shredding of confidential papers which do not need to be retained

5. AOB.

Annex L: Grading the Aspects of Provision

1. The graded profile shows the extent to which the institution has established and implemented its aims and ILOs, provides appropriate programme(s) leading to academic awards that are quality assured and meet the stated aims, all informed by the programme specification(s), the SER and the evidence base generated for and by the site-visit.

2. The creation of the graded profile is achieved by applying a grade to each aspect of provision. There are four numerical grades on the scale: 1, 2, 3, and 4 in ascending order of merit.

3. A grade of 2 or better in an aspect means that the students' learning opportunities and the level of student achievement in that aspect make at least an acceptable contribution to the attainment of the ILOs in the programme specification, and that the aims are being at least broadly met.

4. A grade of 1 means either that the students' learning opportunities and the level of achievement in that aspect make an inadequate contribution to the attainment of the ILOs contained in the programme specification, or that the implementation of the ILOs in that aspect do not provide students with the learning opportunities and achievements that would support a judgement that the aims were being met.

5. The criteria for assigning grades are set out below.

6. The assignment of the grade for each aspect is a matter for the professional judgement of the reviewers, drawing on the evidence from both the self-assessment and the review visit.

The Overall Judgement

7. The overall summative judgement is derived from the profile. All the profile elements have equal weight. Any provision where one or more of the profile elements receives a grade of 1 is subject to the following procedures:

- If, on first review, one or more of the profile elements receives a grade of 1, the quality of the education will be recorded as 'subject to further review within a year'. A review report containing this decision will be published. A second review will take place within 12 months, commencing with a management action plan, leading to a self-evaluation and a second site-visit.

- If, after this further review, the profile still contains one or more elements graded 1, the quality of education will be recorded as 'unsatisfactory'. A second review report will be produced.

8. A profile with all elements graded 2 or better will be reported as 'quality approved'. Where the graded profile includes three or more grade 2s, the HFE will invite the institution to write an action plan. The HFE may wish to arrange with the institution a brief peer review visit to explore the impact of the action plan at a later date.

9. A grade of 3 or higher for CDCO, SPA and EQME indicates that the institution has demonstrated that this aspect is verifiable against comparable programmes in the Kingdom, regionally and worldwide for the academic standards represented in the degrees awarded by the institution. A grade 4 in any of these three aspects demonstrates a higher order of performance that (while still able to benefit from continuing improvement) is at least the equal of any similar programme, verified by the use of external referencing and evaluation.

10. The conclusions given in the oral feedback from the review team to the institution at the close of the review visit will identify strengths and any weaknesses, but grades will not be announced pending the verification of the review process and the draft subject review report arranged by the HFE in association with the QAA in the UK shortly after the completion of the subject review programme.

The Grade Descriptors

Aspects of Provision	Tests to be Applied	To what extent do the students' learning opportunities and the level of student achievement, within this aspect of provision, contribute to meeting the ILOs contained in the programme specification?			
		Do the ILOs, and the level of attainment of those ILOs, allow the aims set by the subject provider to be met?			
		Scale Points			
		1	**2**	**3**	**4**
1. Curriculum Design, Content and Organisation 2. Teaching, Learning and Assessment 3. Student Progression and Achievement 4. Student Support and Guidance 5. Learning Resources 6. The Effectiveness of Quality Management and Enhancement		The ILOs set by the subject provider are not met. This aspect does not support the stated aims and/or the ILOs; there are major shortcomings that must be rectified.	This aspect makes an acceptable contribution to the attainment of the stated ILOs, but significant improvement could be made. The aims set by the subject provider are broadly met.	This aspect makes a substantial contribution to the attainment of the stated ILOs; however, there is scope for improvement. The aims set by the subject provider are substantially met.	This aspect makes a full contribution to the attainment of the stated ILOs. The aims set by the subject provider are met.

Annex M: The Oral Feedback Meeting Agenda

The meeting is expected to last around 30 minutes and is chaired by the review chair.

1. Brief account of the range of activities
2. Announcement of the outcomes of the review, summarising for each aspect the main strengths and any weaknesses
3. Conclusions and any issues that the institution may wish to address
4. Any points for clarification
5. Timetable for the production of the subject review report. (The institution receives the draft report to comment on the factual accuracy, after the review chair has incorporated the specialist reviewers' comments on the first draft and following the verification of all subject reviews and draft reports, and as soon as possible receives from the HFE the final copy together with a summary report containing the graded profile and a copy of the subject overview report.)
6. Thanks offered to the institution for its cooperation and hospitality.

Annex N: The Role of the Institutional Facilitator
Introduction

Each institution is invited by the HFE to nominate a senior member of staff to take on the role of institutional facilitator. The purpose of this role is to liaise closely with the review team to ensure that the team obtains accurate and comprehensive information about the educational provision and its institutional context. The facilitator will not make judgements on the quality of education under review. The experience gained by the facilitator could enable him/her to assist the institution to: prepare for review; disseminate good practice; and focus on areas for improvement identified by each review. The facilitators will be briefed for their role by the HFE. The facilitator can also play an important part after the subject review to facilitate the dissemination of review processes within the institution and the action planning that can optimise the impact of subject review in the faculty/school after the site-visit.

During the subject review site-visit, the institutional facilitator's role is to help the peer reviewers come to a clear and accurate understanding of the institution's structures, policies, priorities and procedures and the nature of provision under review. The facilitator may wish to bring additional information to the attention of the reviewers and may seek to correct factual inaccuracy. However, it is for the reviewers to decide how best to use this information.

1. Institutional facilitator activities before visits

Institutions will find it helpful to involve institutional facilitators fully, and as early as possible, in the process of preparing for a subject review visit. Facilitators can make a useful contribution to the self-evaluation process as an internal consultant wit ha degree of detachment and knowledge of the review process. In particular it is essential that the institutional facilitator has access to all correspondence with HFE and the review chair, and that the institutional facilitator joins with the preliminary e-mailing discussions. This virtual meeting is a valuable first opportunity for review chair and institutional facilitators to discuss the latter's role during the visit. It would be helpful to the institutional facilitator if higher education institutions could supply the review chair with a brief outline of the institutional facilitator's previous experience and current role in the institution, as part of the HFE's introductions of key participants in the subject review.

2. Institutional facilitator during the subject review site-visit

The primary role of the institutional facilitator is to liaise closely with the review team, to ensure that reviewers obtain accurate and comprehensive information about the educational provision and its institutional context. The role requires the institutional facilitator to observe objectively, communicate clearly, respect the protocols on confidentiality (see below), and establish relationships of trust with the review chair, the subject review team, and the named departmental or institutional representative. The institutional facilitator is not a member of the team, and will not be expected to make judgements on the quality of education under review.

The institutional facilitator's essential responsibility is to the integrity of the subject review process; institutional facilitators should not act as advocates for the subject being reviewed, but will provide a means whereby both the institution and the peer reviewers may be confident that all appropriate evidence has been made available to subject reviewers. In fulfilling this role, the institutional facilitator will:

- help the institution understand what issues are of concern to subject reviewers
- respond to requests for comment and information
- draw the attention of the team to evidence or matters which they may have overlooked
- guide the team on the location of evidence
- advise the team on institutional policy and context.

The main vehicle for fulfilling the role described in section 2 will be attendance at meetings. The institutional facilitator may attend the following meetings:

- All team meetings, except the team meeting held on the final day of the visit to determine grades. The institutional facilitator may also attend, if available, any ad hoc team meetings. The role of the institutional facilitator at the whole team meeting the team meeting will be essentially that of an observer, but contributions to the discussion may be made within the context of the institutional facilitator's remit, subject to the discretion of the review chair. The review chair will ensure that the role of the institutional facilitator is clearly established at the first team meeting.

- All meetings held between the reviewers and the institution, except meetings with current and former students or employers. The role of the institutional facilitator in such meetings will be as described above as an observer, except that there may be occasions, for example in a meeting to discuss quality management and enhancement, when the institutional facilitator's institutional function may need to take precedence over facilitation. Any such potential change of role must be clarified with the review chair.

- All daily meetings between the review chair and the departmental representative. These meetings can present a useful opportunity to review the progressive clarification of issues.

The institutional facilitator should be available throughout the duration of the visit.
In addition to attendance at meetings, the institutional facilitator may require occasional access to the base room to convey further information or documentation, or to engage in discussions with members of the review team. Such additional access will be at the discretion of the review chair, but would normally be readily permitted. Outside these specific cases, the institutional facilitator will not normally remain in the base room.

3. Confidentiality

The institutional facilitator will observe the same conventions of confidentiality as subject reviewers. In particular, no information gained in the course of the review can be used or transmitted if it would allow an individual from the institution or the review team to be identified. Institutional facilitators will therefore wish to exercise some care when reporting back to staff in the faculty/school and will need to remember that subject review is a team-based process. The institutional facilitator will have access to the initial written commentaries produced by reviewers for the first team meeting, and any initial drafts of report sections that are produced for the meeting on the penultimate day, but no documents generated by members of the team may be removed from the base room. However, it is perfectly acceptable for institutional facilitators to make their own notes on team discussions in order to assist the institution's understanding of the issues that are of concern to reviewers. In this and other ways, information which relates to the visit and the provision generally can be used or transmitted to aid the effectiveness of the visit and to assist institutional facilitators to discharge their responsibility for quality enhancement in the institution.

4. Relations between the institutional facilitator, review chair and departmental representative

The organisation and running of a review visit are the responsibility of the review chair, and the responsibility for ensuring that the team is provided with sufficient appropriate evidence to allow it to reach its judgements remains with the departmental representative. The role of the institutional facilitator in this regard is to ensure that the channels of communication between the review chair and subject staff are working effectively. It is not intended that institutional facilitators should become responsible for meeting all the reviewers' practical needs. Frequent discussions between institutional facilitators and review chair will be normal features of most visits, particularly to ensure that institutions have a clear picture of the issues that concern the team, and the nature of the evidence required to clarify them.

5. The institutional facilitator after the subject review

The facilitator may wish to play a positive part in the post-review phase when the faculty/school receives the review report and considers any action planning that might be desirable. This will be of particular value if the outcome of a review signals low grades and the possibility of a follow-up review. Equally, the facilitator may have a professional interest in high grades denoting good practice that could be transferred to other parts of the institution.

In addition, institutions may wish the facilitator to assist with promoting awareness within the institution of the subject review process and promoting quality enhancement activities derived from the experience. These activities are at the discretion of the institution.

During follow-up review, the facilitator may continue to play a facilitating role in support of the follow-up review process guided by the role under subject review as set out above. However, if they are thought to be too closely associated with the decisions taken to manage changes arising from the subject review to undertake the facilitator role with impartiality, they may withdraw from the immediate follow-up review process and the institution in these circumstances may nominate another facilitator.

6. Personal specification for the institutional facilitator

Essential:

- thorough knowledge of the structure, policies, priorities, procedures and practices of their own institution
- extensive knowledge and experience of working in higher education at a senior level
- extensive experience of quality assurance procedures in higher education
- knowledge and understanding of the process of subject review or the equivalent
- educated to degree level or equivalent
- qualifications and experience in a subject area other than that being reviewed
- able to maintain confidentiality.

Desirable:

- direct experience of teaching within higher education
- experience of managing and leading quality enhancement activities.