



QEC/SALU/KHP/01

Dated.12.02.2024

**Subject:-**Notification of Institutional Quality Circle (IQC) for quality culture in Higher Education Institutions

**Submitted**

On Sept 2023, a draft received from quality assurance agency(QAA) Higher Education Commission (HEC) of Pakistan, regarding Pakistan Percepts, Standards & Guidelines (PSG 2023) for quality assurance in higher educations, It is required by HEC that **Institutional Quality Assessment & Effectiveness Offices (IQAEs)/ quality enhancement cell(QEC)** should establish **institutional quality circle (IQC)** as a means of maintaining and improving quality, facilitating the development of quality culture across the institution with following ToRs:-

**Membership**

- Chair- Vice Chancellor
- Deputy Chair -Pro Vice Chancellor
- Head of IQAES/QEC
- Heads of Departments
- Student Council Representatives (2)

**Terms of References**

- To monitor all relevant external guidance and requirements related to quality assurance, initiating and coordinating action as appropriate.
- To develop and keep under review the university's Academic Policy and Quality Framework, that is, the systems, policies and guidance for assuring and enhancing the quality of students' learning experience and maintaining academic standards, and to consider and manage the outcomes of these processes.
- To maintain operational oversight of academic and student-related policy and legislation, considering proposals for minor and operational legislative changes, consulting with legal services as appropriate
- To consider proposals for the addition, withdrawal, suspension, and exceptional amendment of programs of study of the university. This will normally be undertaken by chair's action for regular reporting to a subsequent meeting of the committee.
- IQC meets four times a year
- During these discussions the IQAE will ensure that the IQC is informed by, and considers, the key questions under each element of the university/institutional performance report. In this way the discussions of the IQC are rooted in the student life cycle epitomized by the IPR and the data that is generated by student activity.
- Key outputs of the discussions of the IQC are the identification of opportunities for enhancement across the institution.

For favor of orders

  
12/02/2024.  
Director QEC

**Encl:-** Draft PSG -2023(Ref p.no 16,31)



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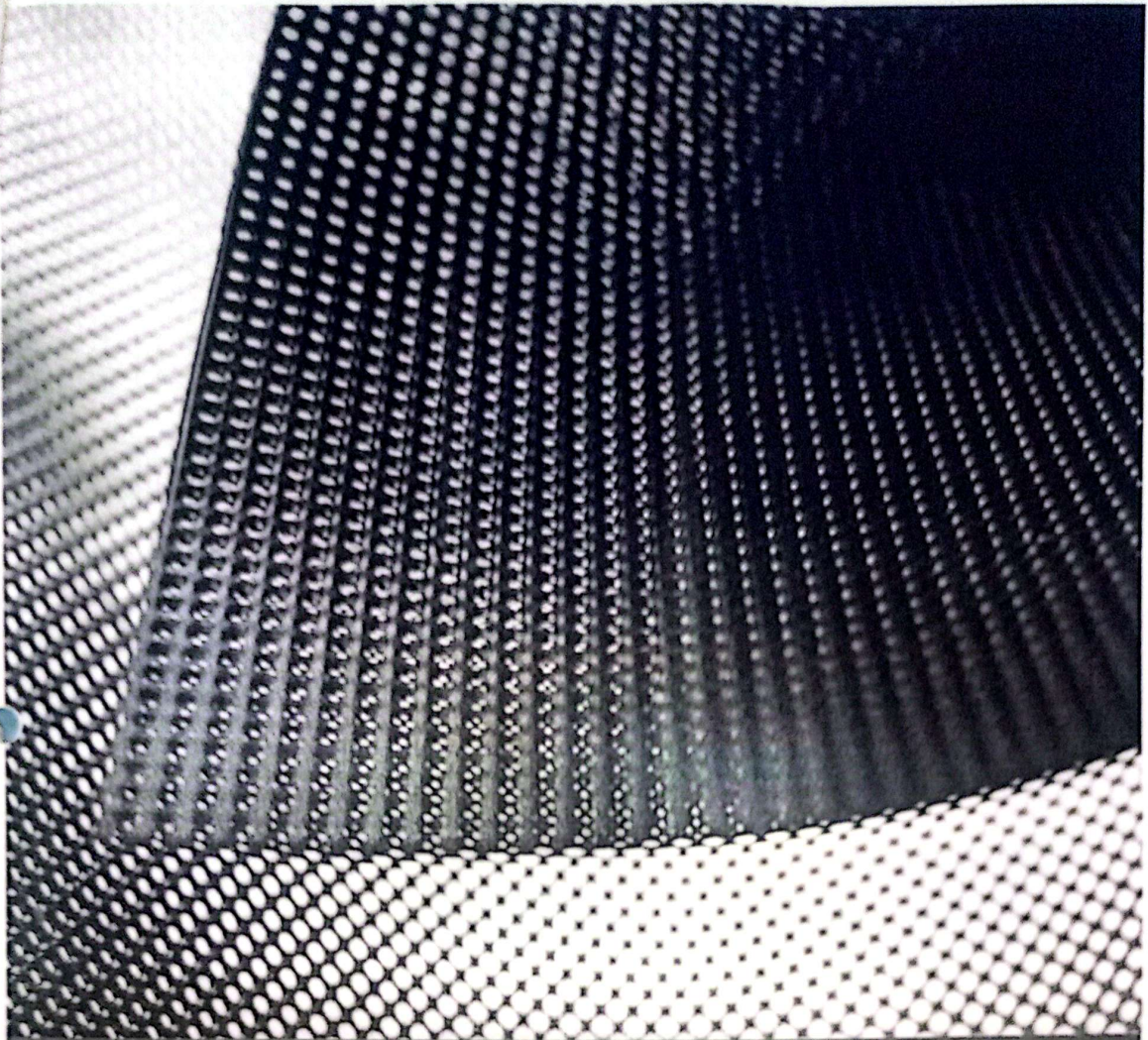
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VICE CHANCELLOR

Regis. no.



# PSG-2023, QA Framework

## Executive Summary

QAA Pakistan

[www.hec.gov.pk](http://www.hec.gov.pk)



# **Pakistan Precepts, Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (PSG-2023)**

The Revamped Quality Assurance (QA) Framework, a collaborative effort between QAA UK and QAA Pakistan. This framework, developed through extensive consultations with key stakeholders such as Vice-Chancellors, Faculty, Directors of Quality Enhancement Cells (QECs), and Students from 22 diverse Public and Private Universities across different regions and institutional types, addresses both global best practices and local contextual challenges.

The framework not only integrates international QA standards but also incorporates localized solutions to address unique challenges faced by higher education institutions in Pakistan. By contextualizing global best practices within the local landscape, the framework offers tailored solutions that cater to the specific needs and nuances of the Pakistani higher education sector. This approach fosters a dynamic quality assurance mechanism that not only adheres to international benchmarks but also navigates through regional intricacies.

The collective insights garnered from extensive consultations have played a crucial role in bridging the gap between global ideals and local realities. As a result, the Revamped QA Framework embodies a holistic approach that aligns international benchmarks with the diverse challenges faced by Pakistani universities. This comprehensive framework underscores the commitment to continuous improvement and the pursuit of excellence in higher education, ultimately contributing to the enhancement of quality and accountability across the sector.

## Background:

Pakistan's higher education landscape has long grappled with significant gaps and challenges in its Quality Assurance (QA) practices. These issues have prompted a critical reevaluation of the existing QA framework, leading to the development of the Revamped Quality Assurance Framework, PSG-2023. The initiative, undertaken in partnership with the Quality Assurance Agency of the United Kingdom (QAA-UK) and facilitated by the British Council, seeks to address these gaps in consultation with international experts. Here are some of the key gaps and challenges in Pakistan's existing QA practices:

- I. **Lack of Consistency:** QA practices across different higher education institutions (HEIs) have lacked consistency, resulting in variations in quality standards and assessment methods. It also inconsistent policies and lack of institutionalization due to adhoc appointment of Tenured Administrative Positions.
- II. **Limited Stakeholder Engagement:** Engagement with various stakeholders, including students, faculty, and industry representatives, has been limited in QA processes, leading to an incomplete understanding of the decisions made and ineffective implementation of the decisions.
- III. **International Alignment Recognition Challenges:** Misalignment with international QA standards may hinder the recognition of Pakistani degrees and qualifications globally, affecting international collaboration and the mobility of students and faculty.
- IV. **Inadequate Self-Assessment:** Many HEIs have struggled with conducting robust self-assessments, hindering their ability to identify areas for improvement.
- V. **Lack of Effectiveness:** Existing QA mechanisms have often lacked effectiveness in ensuring the quality of education provided by HEIs.
- VI. **Transparency and Accountability:** The lack of transparency and accountability in QA practices has raised concerns about the integrity of assessments and the fairness of outcomes.
- VII. **Student-Centric Approach:** QA practices have historically favored a faculty-centric approach over a student-centered one, impacting the overall student experience.
- VIII. **Conformity Over Enhancement:** QA practices have leaned more towards a conformity approach, focusing on meeting minimum standards rather than promoting continuous enhancement.
- IX. **Reactive Rather Than Proactive:** The existing QA mechanisms have often been reactive in nature, addressing issues as they arise rather than proactively identifying and preventing quality-related concerns.
- X. **Isolation Over Collaboration:** Collaboration and knowledge-sharing among HEIs have been limited. HEIs have often operated in isolation, missing out on opportunities for collaborative initiatives and resource-sharing to improve overall quality.
- XI. **Fixed Standards Over Contextual Relevance:** The existing QA standards have been somewhat rigid that essentially mean it was sort of one size fits all and detached from the unique contextual challenges faced by Pakistani HEIs.
- XII. **Limited Student Engagement:** Students, as vital stakeholders in the education process, have been insufficiently engaged in QA processes. Their perspectives, insights, and feedback have not been consistently integrated into QA evaluations.
- XIII. **Limited Data Utilization:** Many HEIs have struggled with collecting and effectively utilizing data for decision-making and quality improvement. This has hindered their ability to implement evidence-based changes.

Recognizing these gaps, Pakistan has embarked on a transformative journey to overhaul its QA practices. PSG-2023, the result of this collaborative effort with QAA-UK and the British Council, aims to address these challenges comprehensively. PSG-2023 promotes a shift towards enhancement-driven QA practices,

a proactive approach to identifying and rectifying issues, and a strong focus on student-centered education. The framework encourages collaboration among HEIs, contextual relevance, robust data utilization, and equitable resource allocation. By tackling these challenges head-on, PSG-2023 lays the foundation for a QA system that not only meets international standards but also reflects the unique needs and aspirations of Pakistan's higher education sector. This transformative initiative ultimately serves the best interests of students and positions Pakistani HEIs on a path of continuous improvement and global competitiveness.

### How the revised QA Framework addresses these challenges:

The revised Quality Assurance Framework, PSG-2023, is designed to comprehensively address the myriad gaps and challenges that have long persisted in Pakistan's higher education Quality Assurance (QA) practices. Here's how the framework tackles each of these issues:

- I. **Consistency:** PSG-2023 introduces standardized QA processes and assessment criteria, ensuring consistency in QA practices across various higher education institutions (HEIs); this, inter alia, include discouraging adhoc appointments of statutory, tenured administrative positions Registrar, Controller of Examinations, Director of Finance, Director QECs.
- II. **Stakeholder Engagement:** The framework places a strong emphasis on stakeholder engagement. It includes mechanisms for involving students, faculty, industry representatives, and other stakeholders in QA processes, ensuring a more holistic understanding of the educational landscape.
- III. **International Alignment:** PSG-2023 integrates global best practices and conforms to international QA standards, bolstering the acceptance of Pakistani academic credentials worldwide. PSG-2023 bears significant resemblance to the ESG-2015 (European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area) concerning its overarching approach, although adapted to distinct contexts. Both frameworks share a common objective of elevating and assuring higher education quality. The connection between PSG-2013 and ESG-2015 lies in their harmonization with global best practices and fundamental principles. Both frameworks offer guidance on critical aspects of quality assurance and enhancement, with an emphasis on transparency, accountability, and ongoing improvement, all while considering their specific contextual requirements.
- IV. **Self-Assessment:** The framework not only encourages HEIs to conduct robust self-assessments, helping them identify their strengths and areas but also gives a robust and effective institutional mechanism for continuous quality improvement (CQI).
- V. **Effectiveness:** PSG-2023 incorporates enhanced monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to ensure the effectiveness of QA practices and their impact on the quality of education provided.
- VI. **Transparency and Accountability:** The framework promotes transparency and accountability through clear guidelines, reporting mechanisms, and audit processes, ensuring the integrity of assessments.
- VII. **Student-Centric Approach:** PSG-2023 shifts the focus from a faculty-centric approach to a more student-centered one. It prioritizes student experiences, satisfaction, and outcomes.

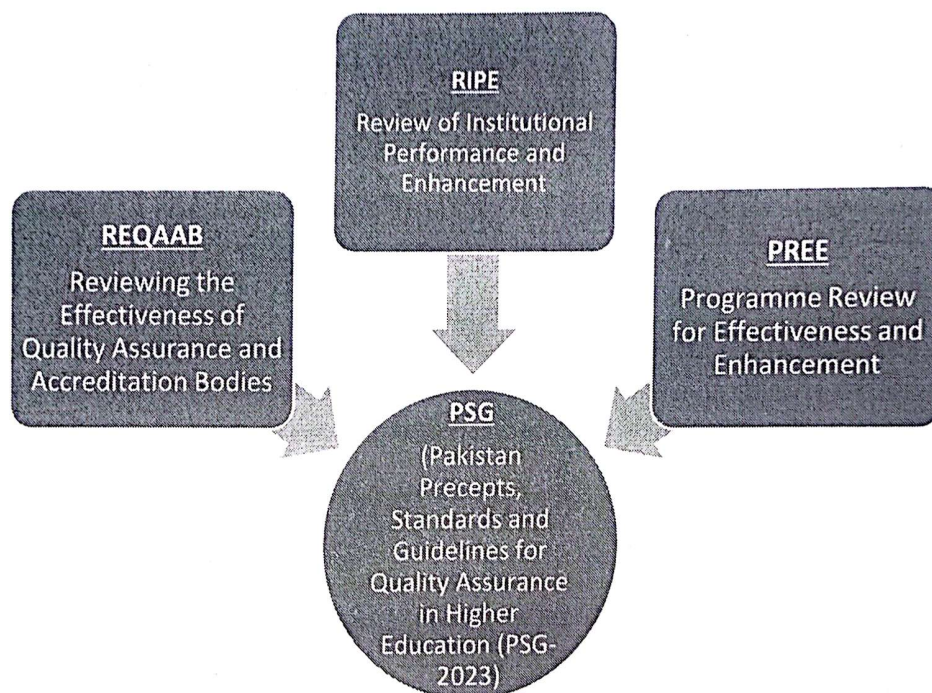
- VIII. **Conformity vs. Enhancement:** The framework strongly encourages HEIs to move beyond mere conformity with standards and instead adopt a culture of continuous enhancement, fostering innovation and improvement.
- IX. **Proactive Approach:** PSG-2023 promotes proactive QA practices, such as risk assessment and early intervention, to address quality-related concerns before they escalate.
- X. **Collaboration:** PSG-2023 encourages collaboration among HEIs, promoting knowledge-sharing, resource-sharing, and collaborative initiatives to enhance overall quality.
- XI. **Contextual Relevance:** The framework allows for flexibility and contextualization of QA standards, enabling HEIs to adapt practices to their unique challenges and needs. It also allows HEC/QAA for focused intervention as per specific classification /categorization of the University as result of the review under the revised framework.
- XII. **Student Engagement:** PSG-2023 integrates students into QA processes, actively seeking their feedback and insights to inform quality improvements.
- XIII. **Data Utilization:** The framework emphasizes data-driven decision-making and provides guidance on collecting, analyzing, and utilizing data for QA and improvement purposes.

In summary, PSG-2023 represents a transformative shift in Pakistan's QA practices. It addresses longstanding gaps and challenges by promoting a culture of continuous improvement, proactive problem-solving, stakeholder engagement, and alignment with international standards. By doing so, the framework aims to enhance the quality of higher education in Pakistan, ensuring that students receive a world-class education that equips them for success in a competitive global landscape. PSG-2023 is a pivotal step in Pakistan's journey toward excellence in higher education, fostering innovation, transparency, and accountability across the sector.

## Pakistan Precepts Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (PSG-2023)

The revamped QA framework is a robust framework that envisions a transformative approach to quality assurance within the higher education landscape of Pakistan. PSG-2023 introduces a holistic and comprehensive outlook on quality enhancement by addressing critical aspects across diverse domains. The following brief provides a concise overview of the domains within the Revised Framework.

**Attachment Link:** For a detailed review please see [Annexure-A](#) / (click →), [Draft Policy-01 PSG-2023.pdf](#)



### REQAB - Reviewing the Effectiveness of Quality Assurance and Accreditation Bodies:

Under the REQAB domain, PSG-2023 introduces a systematic mechanism to assess the effectiveness of Quality Assurance and Accreditation Bodies (QAABs) operating within the higher education sector. This domain recognizes the pivotal role of QAABs in upholding and improving educational quality. The framework evaluates their methodologies, procedures, and impact, fostering accountability and ensuring that these bodies continually align with global best practices. These bodies include:

- a. All the Accreditation Councils
- b. Quality Assurance Agency (QAA), Pakistan; (to be reviewed by any international Body such as given below)
  - i. Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) - United Kingdom  
Website: <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/>
  - ii. Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) - United States  
Website: <https://www.chea.org/>



- iii. The European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) <https://www.enqa.eu/>
- iv. The European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR): <https://www.eqar.eu/>
- v. The International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE): <https://www.inqaahe.org/>
- vi. Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency - TEQSA: [www.teqsa.gov.au](http://www.teqsa.gov.au)

**Quality Standards (REQAAB):**

<b>REQAAB Quality Standards</b>	<b>Standard 1</b>	Official status of quality assurance and accreditation bodies
	<b>Standard 2</b>	Activities, policy and processes for quality assurance and accreditation bodies
	<b>Standard 3</b>	Independence
	<b>Standard 4</b>	Thematic analysis
	<b>Standard 5</b>	Institutional resources
	<b>Standard 6</b>	Internal quality assurance and professional conduct
	<b>Standard 7</b>	Cyclical external review of quality assurance and accreditation bodies
	<b>Standard 8</b>	Consideration of internal quality assurance
	<b>Standard 9</b>	Designing methodologies fit for purpose.
	<b>Standard 10</b>	Implementing processes.
	<b>Standard 11</b>	Review panel/peer-review experts
	<b>Standard 12</b>	Criteria for outcomes
	<b>Standard 13</b>	Reporting
	<b>Standard 14</b>	Complaints and appeals.

**Attachment Link:** For a detailed review please see [Annexure-B](#) /(click →) [Draft Policy-02 REQAAB.pdf](#)

**RIPE - Review of Institutional Performance and Enhancement:**

The RIPE domain sets the stage for a comprehensive evaluation of institutional performance, growth, and advancement. This aspect acknowledges the multifaceted nature of higher education institutions and emphasizes their ongoing evolution. Through RIPE, institutions will undergo rigorous assessments that encompass not only academic achievements but also areas such as governance, research, community engagement, and infrastructure. This domain aims to foster a culture of continuous improvement, ensuring that institutions evolve in response to changing educational landscapes.

- a. External Review by QAA Pakistan
- b. Self-assessment Review ✓

**Following are the Standards:**

<b>STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT</b>	Standard 1	Vision, mission, goals and strategic planning
	Standard 2	Governance, leadership and organization
	Standard 3	Institutional resources and planning
	Standard 4	Audit and finance
	Standard 5	Affiliated colleges/institutions
	Standard 6	Internationalization of higher education and global engagement
<b>ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT</b>	Standard 7	Faculty recruitment, development and support services
	Standard 8	Academic programmes and curricula
	Standard 9	Admission, progression, assessment, and certification
	Standard 10	Student support services
	Standard 11	Impactful teaching and learning and community engagement
	Standard 12	Research, innovation, entrepreneurship and industrial linkage
<b>INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT</b>	Standard 13	Fairness and integrity
	Standard 14	Public information and transparency
	Standard 15	Institutional effectiveness, quality assurance and enhancement
	Standard 16	CQI and cyclical external quality assurance

**Attachment Link:** For a detailed review please see [Annexure-C](#) / (click →) [Draft Policy-03 Institutional level IQAEQA Guidance.pdf](#)

**PREE - Program Review for Effectiveness and Enhancement:**

The PREE domain focuses on the heart of higher education – academic programs. PSG-2023 proposes a meticulous evaluation of program effectiveness, relevance, and impact on student learning outcomes. By reviewing curricula, pedagogical methodologies, research components, and industry integration, this domain aspires to elevate the quality of educational offerings. PREE's emphasis on the alignment between programs and evolving industry needs underscores its commitment to nurturing graduates who are well-prepared for the professional world.

- a. External Review by QAA Pakistan
- b. Self-assessment Review ✓

## Quality Standards under PREE:

<b>PREE Quality Standards</b>	<b>Standard 1:</b>	Programme mission, objectives and outcomes
	<b>Standard 2:</b>	Curriculum design and organization
	<b>Standard 3:</b>	Subject-specific facilities
	<b>Standard 4:</b>	Teaching faculty/staff
	<b>Standard 5:</b>	Institutional policies and process control
	<b>Standard 6:</b>	Internationalization of higher education and global engagement
	<b>Standard 7:</b>	Institutional support and facilities
	<b>Standard 8:</b>	Institutional general requirements

**Attachment Link:** For a detailed review please see [Annexure-D/\(click →\) Draft Policy-04 Programme level IQAEQA Guidance.pdf](#)

### Judgement Framework:

This Judgement approach represents a significant departure from traditional quality assessment methodologies, marking a paradigm shift in how institutions are evaluated. The incorporation of the color classification system adds a layer of clarity to the evaluation process, providing a tangible visual representation of an institution's performance. The four categories, ranging from "Effective Institutions" to "Unclassified Institutions," offer a structured way to differentiate and categorize institutions based on their commitment to quality enhancement and performance.

The QA Framework's classification system empowers the Higher Education Commission (HEC)/Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) with strategic insights to steer the quality enhancement journey effectively. The colors associated with each category signify the extent of improvement, aligning with the institution's dedication to quality:

- **Green (Effective Institutions):** Represents institutions that have consistently demonstrated and retained impressive improvements over time (Effective Improvement Retained - EIR).
- **Blue (Progressive Institutions):** Denotes institutions making progress with a few areas needing further improvement (Limited Improvement Required - LIR).
- **Yellow (Average Institutions):** Indicates institutions performing satisfactorily while maintaining potential for adequate improvements (Adequate Improvement Required - AIR).
- **Grey (Unclassified Institutions):** Represents institutions that require substantial improvements across various areas (Significant Improvement Required - SIR).

## Judgement Process:

### QUALITY EVALUATION & ENHANCEMENT MATRIX(QEE MATRIX) Review Methods & Judgment Framework

[LINK OF QEE MATRIX](#)

#### Review & Categorization of Expectation Outcome Indicators (EOIs)

Through a web-based application, based on the given Parameters for Review of Expectations/EOIs (PRE), the Evaluator will review all the details and finally will score each "Expectation Outcome Indicators" (EOI) that will automatically "categorize EOIs into Different Colors" indicating the level of improvement required.

#### Categorization of Standard

Based on the defined Categorization of Expectations & Standards (CES) Criteria, the "Standard gets categorized, depending how much scores/color each EOIs has got".

#### Classification of HEIs

Based on the defined Categorization of Expectations & Standards (CES) Criteria, the " HEI gets Classification, depending how many Standards have got different score /colors"

## Judgement Framework:

### 360° Mechanism

EVALUATION MATRIX AND JUDGMENT FRAMEWORK				
REVIEW OF EOIS	CATEGORIZATION OF STANDARD	CLASSIFICATION of HEIs	Review Cycle	CQI Plan
Effective Improvement Retained (EIR)	EIR	EFFECTIVE	5 years	Biennial Self-assessment
Limited Improvement Required (LIR)	LIR	PROGRESSIVE	4 years	Yearly Self-assessment
Adequate Improvement Required (AIR)	AIR	AVERAGE / INEFFECTIVE	3 Years	Will be part of Institutional Mentoring Program (IMP) arrangements. + Biennial Self-assessment
Significant Improvement Required (SIR)	SIR	UNCLASSIFIED/ POOR	2 Years	Will be part of Institutional Mentoring Program (IMP) arrangements. + Yearly Self-assessment

Attachment Link: For a detailed review please see (click →) [Annexure-E LINK OF QEE MATRIX](#)

### Outcome of Judgement Framework:

- i. **Length of External Review Cycle:** The duration between external reviews can be tailored based on the institution's classification, ensuring a balance between oversight and flexibility.
- ii. **Length of Internal Review/Self-Assessment Cycle:** Similar to external reviews, internal review cycles can be adjusted to suit the institution's performance level, optimizing the use of resources.
- iii. **Institutional Mentoring Program:** Within the framework, an Institutional Mentoring Program is established to pinpoint institutions that can derive value from mentorship, streamlining the mentoring process for greater effectiveness. This approach centers on empowering stronger institutions to support and guide their less robust counterparts. It cultivates an environment of collaboration and shared learning among institutions that exhibit varying levels of capacity and performance.
- iv. **Customized Policy Interventions:** Tailored policy interventions can be designed to address specific improvement areas, promoting targeted progress vis a vis the particular context of institutional category.
- v. **Grant Funding Allocation:** The institution's performance classification can serve as a basis for allocating grant funding, rewarding institutions for their achievements.
- vi. **Targeted Research and Innovation Grants:** Allocate research and innovation grants to institutions in the "Effective Institutions" and "Progressive Institutions" categories. These grants can encourage institutions to engage in research and innovation projects that contribute to academic excellence.
- vii. **Performance-Based Accreditation Cycle:** identify the accreditation cycle based on the institution's performance category. Institutions in higher categories will have a long review cycle, incentivizing sustained quality enhancement and those with lower categories will not only have shorter cycle of review but also will be part of Institutional mentoring (IMP) providing them valuable opportunities for learning and advancement.
- viii. **Self-Accreditation Status for Effective Institutions:** Grant "Effective Institutions" the privilege of self-accreditation status based on their sustained high-level performance in the external institutional review. Self-accreditation status acknowledges the institution's proven ability to maintain and enhance quality standards. It signifies a high level of institutional autonomy and trust in the institution's internal quality assurance mechanisms. However, this may not include the accreditation of Professional Programs and will also be subject to review but with a longer cycle of review.

### Overall Desired Outcome of the Framework:

The desired outcome of the Revamped Quality Assurance (QA) Framework, PSG-2023, is to usher in a new era of excellence and accountability in Pakistan's higher education sector. This comprehensive framework aims to bring about a transformative shift by addressing longstanding gaps and challenges. It seeks to create a higher education ecosystem that is characterized by consistent quality, international recognition, and a student-centric approach. Through PSG-2023, institutions are empowered to proactively assess their performance, identify areas for improvement, and align their practices with international best standards. This initiative envisions institutions that not only meet the diverse needs of their students but also prepare them for global success.

Furthermore, PSG-2023 aspires to foster a culture of transparency, collaboration, and continuous improvement. It encourages active engagement with stakeholders, including students, faculty,

administrators, and accreditation bodies, to ensure that the higher education system remains responsive and accountable. By promoting contextual relevance and data-driven decision-making, PSG-2023 aims to equip institutions with the tools and strategies needed to thrive in a rapidly evolving educational landscape. Ultimately, the desired outcome of this framework is a higher education sector in Pakistan that stands as a beacon of quality, innovation, and inclusivity, contributing significantly to the nation's development and global recognition. In summary the desired outcomes of the revamped framework, PSG-2023, are briefly given in the points below:

- Enhanced international recognition and acceptance of Pakistani degrees and qualifications.
- Greater consistency and effectiveness in quality assurance practices.
- Improved transparency and accountability mechanisms.
- A shift towards a student-centric approach in higher education.
- Transformation from conformity-based to enhancement-driven practices.
- Proactive rather than reactive quality assurance measures.
- A transition from faculty-centered to student-centered educational environments.
- Encouragement of collaboration over isolation among institutions.
- Emphasis on contextual relevance over fixed standards; avoiding one size fits all approach.
- Increased stakeholder engagement and participation.
- Utilization of data for informed decision-making and continuous improvement.
- Strengthened self-assessment practices.
- A comprehensive and inclusive quality assurance ecosystem.
- Enhanced quality and employability of graduates.
- A thriving higher education sector contributing to national development.

These outcomes collectively represent the framework's commitment to fostering a culture of quality, excellence, and continuous improvement within Pakistan's higher education institutions.

institutions (HEIs) classified - as the result of review - as Unclassified and Average will be part of an Institutional Mentoring Programme (see IMP in [Annex 6](#)).

The terms of reference for the Board for Assessment of Quality Assurance (BAQA) are described in [Annex 15](#).

## Section 2.2: Key roles and responsibilities

### Facilitators

The Director of Institutional Quality Assessment and Effectiveness (IQAE /QEC) shall be the facilitator/focal person for the coordination, or any other nominated by the university. The facilitator will help to organise and ensure the smooth running of the External Review of Institutional Performance and Enhancement and improve the flow of information between the review panel and the university. An effective working relationship between QAA and the facilitator should help to avoid misunderstandings.

In summary, the facilitator will carry out the following key roles:

- liaise with the QAA Officer to organise the Review of Institutional Performance and Enhancement
- during the on-site visit, provide the review panel with advice and guidance on the university's approach and arrangements
- during the on-site visit, meet the QAA Officer and the Lead Student Representative (and possibly also members of the review panel) outside the formal meetings to provide or seek further clarification about particular questions or issues.

Further details about the role of the facilitator can be found in [Annex 7](#).

### Student engagement in RIPE for EQA

Students play a critical role in the quality assessment of higher education. Given their current academic experience, students provide valuable insight for the review panel.

Students of the institution under review can input to the process by:

- nominating a Lead Student Representative, who is involved throughout the Review of Institutional Performance and Enhancement
- contributing their views through a student submission describing their academic experience and their experiences of quality assurance at the institution, which is key evidence for the desk-based analysis
- participating in meetings during the on-site visit to advise the review panel of the institution's approach and arrangements
- working in partnership with the university to draw up and implement the action plan after the Review of Institutional Performance and Enhancement.

Further details about student engagement in the review can be found in [Annex 8](#).

### Lead student representatives

This role allows students to play a central part throughout the Review of Institutional Performance and Enhancement.

The Lead Student Representative (LSR) will help to ensure smooth communication between the Student Council for Academic Learning & Enhancement (SCALE) - a student body to be constituted by the HEIs for getting students' feedback into improving quality assurance

mechanisms - the institution and QAA, and will normally oversee the production of a student submission. The university and LSR will also select the students that the review panel will meet, based on advice from QAA.

This role is voluntary. Where possible, the LSR should be appointed by the students themselves, with support from SCALE or a similar student representative body or equivalent within the institution. The LSR may be a member of SCALE or representative of a similar body but may not hold a senior staff position in the university. A job-share arrangement would be acceptable, as long as it is clear who is the main point of contact. However, the HEI has to have a fair procedure to select the LSR and, accordingly, nomination is sent to QAA. QAA may further develop guidelines for selection of LSRs if required.

The institution should offer as much operational and logistical support to the LSR as is feasible. In particular, institutions should share relevant information or data so that the student submission is well informed and evidence-based.

In summary, the Lead Student Representative may carry out the following key roles, as per instruction by QAA:

- liaise with the facilitator throughout RIPE for EQA to ensure smooth communication between SCALE or a similar student body and the institution
- give feedback on RIPE for EQA and its progress to the student body
- organise and oversee the preparation of the student submission
- assist with selecting students to meet the review panel
- ensure continuity of activity throughout the Review of Institutional Performance and Enhancement
- facilitate comments from the student body on the draft RIPE for EQA report
- work with the institution to develop and deliver its action plan, where there is an unsatisfactory judgement.

Further details about the role of the LSR can be found in [Annex 8](#), which will be revised by the QAA from time to time for smooth implementation in a phased manner.

### **Reviewers and review panels**

The size of the review panel is correlated to the scale and complexity of the provision under review. Usually, the three measures below should be taken into consideration:

- the total number of higher education students (headcount)
- the diversity of provision (course types, modes of attendance, course levels)
- the number of affiliated colleges that degree-awarding institutions work with to deliver complete degree courses.

Each review panel will normally consist of three to six reviewers, including at least one member or former member of academic staff from another institution in Pakistan and may include one student reviewer. Larger teams may include a reviewer or reviewers with expertise in specific curriculum areas, or from an international background, or a current employer or vocational expert.

Review panel members are selected on the basis of their experience in higher education and are expected to draw on this in their conclusions and evaluations about the management of quality and academic standards. The composition of each review panel will also take into consideration the reviewers' knowledge and experience of higher education provision with, or at, similar types of institution to the one under review.



## **Annex 2: IQAE and IQC - Terms of reference**

### **The Office of Institutional Quality Assessment and Effectiveness (IQAE)**

QAA expects that an Office of Institutional Quality Assessment and Effectiveness (IQAE)/ QEC is established in all universities, their sub-campuses and affiliated colleges. The IQAE within each institution are the focal point for all quality assurance policies and practices and have an important role in facilitating the development and delivery of internal and external quality assurance. One of their main functions is the management of internal quality assurance processes, at both programme and institutional level. They also have a key responsibility in liaising with external quality assurance bodies, including the HEC, QAA and accreditation councils.

IQAEs have clear authority within the institution to develop, deliver and manage quality assurance policies and procedures. The offices are led by a senior manager (equivalent to the status of Dean/Administrative Head) who directly reports to the head of institution (Vice Chancellor/Rector or equivalent), and who has quality assurance within their remit. IQAEs include staff aligned to each faculty or department, to help ensure effective and consistent operation across the institution. There is an expectation that IQAEs will promote ways to engage students in quality assurance, including in the Office's own operation.

The role of the IQAE is crucial in enabling the university to develop an organisational quality culture oriented to enhancing the quality of its programmes.

### **Terms of reference for the Office of Institutional Quality Assessment and Effectiveness**

IQAEs are responsible for:

- promoting public confidence that the standard of academic awards is safeguarded and that quality is assured and enhanced
- systematic internal review of academic standards and the quality of teaching and learning in each subject area
- systematic review of academic affiliations and partnerships with other institutions to ensure effective management of standards and quality of programmes
- facilitating external review of programmes and the institution
- coordination and liaison with QAA-HEC for implementation of HEC's guidelines related to quality assurance
- coordination between accrediting departments and accreditation councils for timely accreditation of programmes from respective councils
- facilitating in establishment and functioning of IQAE sub-offices at campuses, constituent units and affiliated institutions
- supervision of sub-offices of IQAE at campuses, constituent units and affiliated institutions
- actively participating in meetings of all statutory bodies
- capacity building of all internal stakeholders on QA-related activities
- ensuring institutional alignment with the National Qualifications Framework of Pakistan at associate degree programme, bachelor, master's, and doctoral level
- developing and enhancing quality assurance processes to affirm that the quality of provision and the standard of awards are being maintained
- fostering curriculum, subject and faculty/staff development, together with research and other scholarly activities
- developing and enhancing procedures for student partnership in quality assurance activities

- ensuring that the institution's quality assurance procedures are aligned with national arrangements for maintaining and improving the quality of higher education
- developing, managing and enhancing procedures for the following:
  - approval of new programmes
  - annual monitoring and evaluation, including at programme and faculty level, as well as of stakeholder evaluation
  - departmental review
  - student feedback
  - employer and alumni feedback
  - faculty feedback
  - employer participation in relevant quality assurance activities
  - programme review and self-assessment (see below)
  - institutional review and self-assessment
  - regulatory frameworks for qualifications.

As noted above, IQAEs also manage the quality assessment mechanisms of institutions as well as academic programmes, through a self-assessment process. This process is:

- comprehensive – meaning that it covers all areas of the institution's operation
- inclusive – meaning that it actively involves all stakeholders, in particular students
- attentive to external reference points, including the Precepts and Standards Guidelines of HEC and the National Qualifications Framework.

The self-assessment process results in a report which is directed to securing high academic standards and enhancing the quality of the student learning experience. Programme areas are then required to initiate an action plan for the sharing of good practice and improvement.

### **The Institutional Quality Circle (IQC)**

The quality culture should be facilitated by the Institutional Quality Circle (IQC) headed by the university Vice Chancellor/Rector as part of the institutionalisation of quality in the institutions of higher learning.

The institutional governance and quality framework encompasses the Institutional Quality Circle (IQC). The IQC is a key tool for the IQAE in establishing a quality culture within an institution. It is chaired by the Vice Chancellor and facilitated by the IQAE. Aside from ratifying the institutional self-evaluation (described above), the IQC meets four times a year in its role as the ultimate delegated authority for the management of quality assurance at the university.

### **Terms of reference for the Institutional Quality Circle (IQC)**

- To monitor all relevant external guidance and requirements related to quality assurance, initiating and coordinating action as appropriate.
- To develop and keep under review the university's Academic Policy and Quality Framework, that is, the systems, policies and guidance for assuring and enhancing the quality of students' learning experience and maintaining academic standards, and to consider and manage the outcomes of these processes.
- To have oversight of the university's approach to assuring the completeness, accuracy, reliability and fitness for purpose of information provided for applicants and students.
- To maintain operational oversight of academic and student-related policy and legislation, considering proposals for minor and operational legislative changes, consulting with legal services as appropriate.

- To consider proposals for the addition, withdrawal, suspension, and exceptional amendment of programmes of study of the university. This will normally be undertaken by chair's action for regular reporting to a subsequent meeting of the committee.

During these discussions the IQAE will ensure that the IQC is informed by, and considers, the key questions under each element of the university/institutional performance report. In this way the discussions of the IQC are rooted in the student life cycle epitomised by the IPR and the data that is generated by student activity.

A key output of the discussions of the IQC are the identification of opportunities for enhancement across the institution.

### **Membership**

- Chair: Vice Chancellor
- Deputy chair: Pro-Vice Chancellor
- Head of the Institutional Quality Assessment and Effectiveness unit
- Heads of Department
- Student Council representatives (2)