



QAA
Global

Going Global Partnership

**Reviewing and Revamping Quality Assurance
in Pakistan**

Research & Gap Analysis Report

March 2022

Drafted by Ian Welch, Kevin Kendall (QAA UK)

Contents

Acknowledgements	3
Introduction	3
Objectives	3
Methodology	3
General Observations	4
Summary of Recommendations	9
References	11
Appendix 1	12

A review and gap analysis of the existing quality assurance standards in Pakistan to the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (European Standards and Guidelines; ESG).

Acknowledgements

Thanks to individuals and to the Higher Education Commission (HEC), the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) and universities and students in Pakistan for their cooperation and helpful input into the content of this report.

Introduction

The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education in the UK has been asked to review the current quality assurance processes followed by the Higher Education Commission (HEC) in Pakistan and make recommendations towards making these processes and systems more outcome and result orientated. One of the first tasks is to carry out a mapping exercise and gap analysis on the existing system.

Objectives

The following are the objectives of the project:

- Map out existing regulatory framework, governance, and operational structure.
- Map out approaches to quality assurance and enhancement.
- Review the existing standards and QA methods in Pakistan against international standards and criteria (European Standards and Guidelines - ESG).
- Identify areas for development and gaps in QA system.
- Make recommendations on how the existing approach could be changed/improved to become more outcome and results oriented.

Methodology

Documentation including Higher Education Committee (HEC) Ordinance, quality assurance manual, self-assessment manual and information about Accreditation Councils was examined and a clarification meeting was held with HEC. Following this, five workshops were held with HEC/QAA, senior staff at universities, Quality Enhancement Cell (QEC) staff, faculty staff and students. Twenty- two universities and up to 240 staff and 130 students were invited to participate.

The workshops were held over five days in February 2022 and had the following objectives:

- Explore the existing Pakistan regulatory framework, QAA governance and operation structure.
- Explore approaches to quality assurance and enhancement in Pakistan.
- Identify areas for development in the Pakistan QA system

The workshops took the form of five separate sessions of discussion in groups and feedback using the following framework of questions:

- What the current system of quality assurance in Pakistan looks like from a HEC/QAA/Institution/QEC/faculty/student perspective?
- What should the future system of quality assurance in Pakistan look like from a HEC/QAA/Institution/QEC/faculty/student perspective?

General Observations

There are some general observations that apply to the quality assurance processes investigated.

Pakistan Standards tend to be written from an institutional perspective and the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG) are student focussed. From feedback in the workshops, there seems to be a will to change this to a more student facing quality assurance focus.

The current quality assurance system is generally based around compliance. Although it is acknowledged that compliance is important, the workshop participants were quite clear that they would prefer an enhancement focus.

Many workshop participants expressed the view that there is a diversity of universities in Pakistan, and this could indicate a contextualised approach to quality assurance. There could, for example be some core standards applicable to all universities and some specific ones for particular contexts.

The 11 Standards used for performance evaluation in higher education in Pakistan generally fall under ESG 1.0 - 1.10. Although some of the Standards in ESG2 and ESG 3 are addressed in the documentation, they are not written in the form of specific Standards.

Mapping of the 11 Pakistan higher education Standards against the ESG1, ESG2, and ESG 3, what happens currently in Pakistan and the gaps identified from the comparison are detailed in appendix 1.

Mapping of Pakistan Standards and Quality assurance methods in Pakistan against the ESG and identification of gaps (see appendix 1)

This is a summary of the main points and recommendations from the gap analysis:

Student involvement

- Currently the Pakistan standards have an institutional focus, rather than a student focus.
- Students are unable to take an active role in their higher education. They have limited opportunities to influence the quality of programmes at their university, they do not regularly participate in the review and analysis of programmes to make sure that they are up to date, and they are not involved in the design of quality assurance methodologies or their continuous improvement.
- Students and staff are not routinely involved in analysing data and developing follow-up activities that improve the quality of the students learning experience.
- Students are not part of review teams.
- Standards are not aligned with the ESG from a student perspective.

Recommendations

- Revise the Standards to align with the student focus of the ESGs.
- Develop and implement procedures that enable students and other stakeholders to participate in deliberative regulatory committees and contribute to decision making.
- Amend the Standards to promote the participation of students and other stakeholders in deliberative committees and decision making within their Institution.
- Train students and other stakeholders to engage with these new roles.
- Train and engage students as a part of peer review teams.

Student feedback

- Student feedback is widespread and routine, but the outcomes of feedback are not communicated and the impact of feedback is unclear.

Recommendations

- Amend the standards to ensure that student feedback is aligned to subsequent actions and all actions are communicated to students.

Employment

- There is poor collaboration with industry in the design of programmes and therefore programmes do not always match the needs of industry and the employment prospects of students.
- There is a lack of careers guidance in universities and poor links with employers to support students into gaining relevant employment.
- Student vocational objectives are not fully supported by the faculties who often have limited recent industrial experience and recruitment of staff tends to focus on research credentials above teaching ability or industrial experience.
- Universities should improve industry links by recruiting teaching staff with industrial experience, improve links with alumni, increase industrial placements for students and include progression to employment as a metric in quality assurance.

Recommendations

- Develop new standards that promote close integration with industry and employers, to develop programmes that meet the needs of industry and enable graduates to have appropriate employment opportunities.

Follow up actions

- QAA does not follow up issues to check if improvements/actions have taken place.

Recommendations

- Amend the process to incorporate a follow up stage to check an institution's progress following external review.

Self-evaluation

- Self-evaluation is compliance based and not geared to promoting enhancement. It does not enable continuous quality improvement and enhancement.
- There is limited external input into self-evaluation.

Recommendations

- Amend the guidance about self-evaluation to promote a focus on:
 - a. The evaluation and review of effectiveness against the Standards rather than compliance with the Standards.
 - b. How continual improvement and enhancement is achieved at the institution.
 - c. The engagement of faculty, students, and other stakeholders with the self-evaluation of programmes and of the Institution.

Universities

- Universities do not routinely contextualise the standards to reflect their own context.

Recommendations

- Amend the Standards to enable Universities to contextualise their approaches to the quality assurance and enhancement of higher education standards and quality.

Quality Enhancement Cells

- QECs generally function separate to faculty and have little stakeholder involvement. They are not usually embedded in schools or faculties. Academic staff and students are not routinely involved with QEC activities.

Recommendations

- Revise the remit of QECs to enable them to:
 - a. Be embedded in the academic components of an institution.
 - b. Enable the faculties to engage with the work of the QEC and contribute to its output.
 - c. Enable students to engage with the work of QECs and contribute to its output.

Data

- There are no consistent processes to systematically collect, monitor and action information about student admissions, performance, achievement, or progression.
- Data is not systematically and consistently collected. Quantitative information is not always contextualised against qualitative information and is not routinely used to improve quality.

Recommendations

- Develop a minimum standard for data management for all Universities that ensures:
 - a. The standardisation of data content across the sector.
 - b. The accuracy of data.
 - c. The institutional ownership of data.
 - d. The consistency of data collection.
- Develop a repository of institutional data that is publicly available and that can be used for accurate comparison and benchmarking.

Admissions

- There are no processes for the recognition of non-formal and informal learning as criteria for admissions.

Recommendations

- Amend the standards to incorporate a process for the recognition of non-formal and informal learning as part of admissions criteria.

Complaints and appeals

- Universities do not always have appropriate procedures for dealing with students' complaints and appeals.

Recommendations

- Ensure a student complaints and appeals process is explicit in the Pakistan Standards for higher education.

Equality and diversity

- Student well-being and welfare is not high on the agenda at many universities.
- Universities should have equal opportunities policy especially regarding female participation. Admissions and student support do not clearly take account of equality, diversity, and inclusion.
- The Standards do not explicitly encourage higher education institutions to consider the needs of a diverse student population, and the shift towards student-centred learning and flexible modes of learning and teaching, when allocating, planning, and providing the learning resources and student support.
- Study programmes do not always respect and attend to the diversity of students and their needs, enable flexible learning paths, consider, and use different modes of delivery, where appropriate, flexibly use a variety of pedagogical methods, regularly evaluate, and adjust the modes of delivery and pedagogical methods, encourage a sense of autonomy in the learner, while ensuring adequate guidance and support from the teacher and promote mutual respect within the learner-teacher relationship.

Recommendations

- Ensure that the new Standards have student well-being, welfare and equality, diversity and inclusion embedded at every stage.

Communication and engagement at all levels

- Community engagement with learning and teaching is not consistent and reflects the patchy level of stakeholder involvement in learning and teaching and quality assurance in general.
- The Standards do not explicitly promote internal quality assurance processes that allow participation across the institution and therefore quality assurance is not embedded across the institutions.
- Faculty staff tend to work in silos and academic staff and students are distanced from the HEC.
- IQA takes place every year, but cyclical EQA processes do not clearly align with this.
- HEC depends on QEC for information but does not visit all universities, QEC also often is distanced from the faculties.
- Feedback, for example from students on resource issues does not usually result in action.
- External quality assurance does not always clearly link with internal quality assurance and not all programmes are accredited by an Accreditation Council and therefore not all programmes have national accreditation.
- There are also no international standards, for example the Framework for Qualifications in the European Higher Education area (FQEHQA), or benchmarks used and the Standards are not aligned to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- HEC and QAA do not have representation from academia or stakeholders in their developmental or deliberative committees.

Recommendations

- Develop a new quality assurance framework that has communication and engagement of all stakeholders as a priority in all processes.

Dissemination of good practice

- Good practice is not systematically shared within or across institutions to encourage innovation in teaching and the use of new technologies and other best practice.

Recommendations

- Develop and deliver processes and events for the dissemination of good practice identified in external review activity across the higher education sector in Pakistan.

Standards

- Standards do not explicitly promote quality assurance processes for admissions, delivery, assessment, certification, information management and public information.

Recommendations

- Amend Standards to explicitly promote quality assurance processes for admissions, delivery, assessment, certification, information management and public information.

Research

- The HE Standards do not explicitly promote quality assurance policies that reflect the relationship between research and learning and teaching and take account of both the national context in which the university operates, the university context and its strategic approach.
- Faculty recruitment does not always balance an appropriate research profile against teaching ability, industrial experience, and the needs of the wider community.
- The Standards do not explicitly encourage universities to provide staff with a supportive environment that encourages scholarly activity and to strengthen the link between education and research.

Recommendations

- Develop a Standard relating to research and include within the Pakistan higher education Standards.

ESG2

- The role of the QECs could be exploited better through embedding them in the faculties or schools and involving more stakeholders in the quality assurance process, concentrating on enhancement as well as compliance.
- Most stakeholders, for example students and employers are not involved in the design or periodic review of programmes. In addition, most stakeholders are not involved in the design of quality assurance methodologies or their continuous improvement.
- External quality assurance does not always clearly link with internal quality assurance and there is inconsistent follow up after external review. Arrangements for outcomes or judgements made as the result of external quality assurance are described as 'transitional.'
- There is little evidence of systematic enhancement across the sector following external review and students are not part of review teams.
- There is no clear process for complaints or appeals about external reviews, although there is a requirement for Institutions to have a complaints policy or equivalent.

Recommendations

- Develop Standards in the Pakistan higher education context which are compatible with the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG) 2.1 - 2.7.

ESG3

- Most stakeholders, for example students or employers are not involved in the design of quality assurance methodologies or their continuous improvement.
- There is little evidence of structured analyses across the higher education system and dissemination of developments, trends and areas of good practice or persistent difficulty.
- HEC and QAA do not have representation from academia or stakeholders in their developmental or deliberative committees and have limited resources to carry out their remit.
- There is no evaluation process for HEC and QAA.

Recommendations

- Develop Standards in the Pakistan higher education context which are compatible with the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG) 3.1 - 3.7.

Summary of Recommendations

1. Revise the standards to align with the student focus of the ESGs.
2. Develop and implement procedures that enable students and other stakeholders to participate in deliberative regulatory committees and contribute to decision making.
3. Amend the Standards to promote the participation of students and other stakeholders in deliberative committees and decision making within their institution.
4. Train students and other stakeholders to engage with these new roles.
5. Train and engage students as a part of peer review teams.
6. Amend standards to ensure that student feedback is aligned to subsequent actions and all actions are communicated to students.
7. Develop new standards that promote close integration with industry and employers, to develop programmes that meet the needs of industry and enable graduates to have appropriate employment opportunities.
8. Amend process to incorporate a follow up stage to check an institution's progress following external review.
9. Amend process to incorporate a follow up stage to check an institution's progress following external review.
10. Amend guidance about self-evaluation to promote a focus on:
 - a. The evaluation and review of effectiveness against Standards rather than compliance with Standards
 - b. How continual improvement and enhancement is achieved at the institution.
 - c. The engagement of faculty, students, and other stakeholders with the self-evaluation of programmes and of the institution.
11. Amend Standards to enable Universities to contextualise their approaches to the quality assurance and enhancement of higher education standards and quality.
12. Revise the remit of QECs to enable them to:
 - a. Be embedded in the academic components of an institution.
 - b. Enable faculty to engage with the work of the QEC and contribute to its output.
 - c. Enable students to engage with the work of QECs and contribute to its output.
13. Develop a minimum standard for data management for all Universities that ensures:
 - a. The standardisation of data content across the sector.

- b. The accuracy of data.
 - c. The institutional ownership of data.
 - d. The consistency of data collection.
14. Develop a repository of institutional data that is publicly available and that can be used for accurate comparison and benchmarking.
 15. Amend the standards to incorporate a process for the recognition of non-formal and informal learning.
 16. Ensure a student complaints and appeals process is explicit in the Pakistan Standards for higher education.
 17. Ensure that the new Standards have student well-being, welfare and equality, diversity and inclusion embedded at every stage.
 18. Develop a new quality assurance framework that has communication and engagement of all stakeholders as a priority in all processes.
 19. Develop and deliver processes and events for the dissemination of good practice identified in External review activity across the Pakistani Higher Education sector.
 20. Amend Standards to explicitly promote quality assurance processes for admissions, delivery, assessment, certification, information management and public information.
 21. Develop Standards in the Pakistan higher education context which are compatible with the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG) 2.1 - 2.7.
 22. Develop Standards in the Pakistan higher education context which are compatible with the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG) 3.1 - 3.7.

References

1. Quality Assurance Manual for Higher Education in Pakistan.
2. An ordinance to provide for the establishment of the Higher Education Commission.
3. Performance Evaluation Standards for the HEIs.
4. Institutional Performance Evaluation Manual.
5. Revised Criteria for Assessment of QECs.
6. SAR Target Policy 2021-22.
7. Targets for QECs for Assessment Year 2021-22.
8. Higher Education Commission Self-Assessment Manual.
9. Good Practices for Quality Assurance for Accreditation Councils in Pakistan.
10. Standards Operating Procedures (SOPs) for Accreditation Councils.

DRAFT

Appendix 1

Mapping of Pakistan Standards against ESGs, the current situation and gap analysis.

ESG (European Standards and Guidelines)	Pakistan standards	What happens currently in Pakistan – collated information from workshops and pre-reading	Gaps identified from a comparison of the existing quality assurance practices in Pakistan and the Pakistan Standards, to the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area
1.1 Policy for quality assurance Standard: Institutions should have a policy for quality assurance that is made public and forms part of their strategic management. Internal stakeholders should develop and implement this policy through appropriate structures and processes, while involving external stakeholders.	Standard 1. Mission and goals (1.5 Institutional Effectiveness The institution demonstrates clarity and relevance of mission and conducts periodic reviews for evaluation of the content and relevance of its mission and goals and to assess their effectiveness in guiding planning and resource allocation. The evaluation results are periodically reviewed so that the institution demonstrates that it has responded to reviews to improve and further enhance institutional quality and its relevance to national needs)	1. All Universities need to have a clear vision and mission that is periodically reviewed to ensure its relevance. 2. Universities should take more responsibility for Quality assurance and should be more self-regulating. 3. There should be some common standards and some standards that are contextualised to the University 4. Unreliable university rankings 5. Good practice is not routinely shared across the Higher education sector 6. Self-evaluation takes place annually but does not lead to improvement. It is based on form filling, but the process does not result in clear enhancements. Thematic reviews might be an alternative.	ESG are student facing. Pakistani standards are institution facing. There is a will for more student facing quality assurance, but standards are not orientated around this focus. (S) Stakeholder participation in planning is not systematic. (16, 17) Self-evaluation is compliance based and not geared to promoting enhancement (6, 7, 9, 10) Progression to employment is not measured as part of self- evaluation (17, 18) Quality assurance is not embedded across institutions (1, 8) QECs generally function separate to faculty and have little stakeholder involvement (11, 12, 13, 14, 15)

	Standard 3. Organisation and governance (Standard 10 Assessment and quality assurance (10.6 Institutional Effectiveness An effective self-assessment and Internal Quality Assurance System (IQA) is developed and applied through a QEC or any other similar structure for the purpose of realization of institutional mission and improved compatibility at national and international level. The IQA, self-assessment and University Quality Standards and Assessment adoption process efficiently corresponds to External Quality Assurance system, and it is capable of integrating the assessment results for institutional quality enhancement)	7. The self-assessment seems repetitive and irrelevant. It does not evaluate University leadership or non-academic activities of students. 8. All Universities need structured guidelines to promote enhancement 9. The internal quality assurance process is based on conformity/compliance against the 11 standards and not enhancement 10. Data is collected but is not used for enhancement 11. Quality assurance is not embedded throughout the University. Faculty members should be trained in QA processes in order to be able to play their part in quality assurance and establish a quality culture. 12. Faculty tend to work in silos. There is poor communication between university management, faculty, QEC and students. 13. QECs are not empowered and can be marginalised. They are sometimes not valued by their university. QECs should have much closer links to faculty (e.g. QEC placements in	Quality assurance standards are not easily contextualised by individual Universities. (1) Enhancement is not embedded in the standards (5) Standards do not explicitly promote quality assurance policies that reflect the relationship between research and learning & teaching and take account of both the national context in which the institution operates, the institutional context and its strategic approach. (S) Standards do not explicitly promote internal quality assurance processes that allow participation across the institution. (S) Quantitative information is not always contextualised against qualitative information, or used to improve quality (10, 19) Universities do not routinely contextualise the standards to reflect their own context.
--	---	---	--

		faculty/schools, placement of faculty in QEC, placement of QEC in each faculty or school). 14. QECs should have student members. 15. No reference to Quality in VC performance appraisal documentation. QA should be embedded in VC role. 16. Students do not participate in statutory or deliberative committees. 17. There is no mechanism for feedback from alumni 18. Progression to employment should be part of the quality assurance of programmes and universities. 19. Current system is too data dependant. Data is inconsistently gathered and is not recognised by faculty.	
1.2 Design and approval of programmes Standard: Institutions should have processes for the design and approval of their programmes. The programmes should be designed so that they meet the objectives set for them, including the	Standard 8. Curricula and academic programmes (8.4 Institutional Effectiveness: The institution offers recognized academic programmes and curricula consistent with its mission and effective in achieving the learning	1. Universities offer programmes consistent with their mission, but the learning outcomes are not always closely linked to student and employment requirements. 2. Degrees obtained at graduation are not always recognised nationally and especially internationally and do not therefore enable international	ESG are student facing. Pakistani standards are institution facing. There is a will for more student facing quality assurance but standards are not orientated around this focus (S, 1,2,3,4,5). Programmes are not explicitly matched to the FQEHEA (2). There is poor collaboration with industry in the design of programmes and therefore

intended learning outcomes. The qualification resulting from a programme should be clearly specified and communicated, and refer to the correct level of the national qualifications framework for higher education and, consequently, to the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area	goals of students including required skills and degrees, diplomas, and certificates. The academic quality standards are equally compatible at national and international level for the purpose of Students' and Credits' mobility and recognition. These academic quality standards are evaluated systematically, and results are used for continuous quality improvement and enhancement.)	recognition and therefore mobility. - Evaluation of programmes against graduate employment requirements is not well developed. - There is poor careers advice and limited access to careers centres - Programme content does not always match the needs of industry	programmes do not always match the needs of industry and the employment prospects of students (1, 5). There is not an effective evaluation process which enables continuous quality improvement and enhancement (3). There is a lack of careers guidance in universities and poor links with employers to support students into gaining relevant employment (4). Universities should improve industry links by recruiting teaching staff with industrial experience, improve links with alumni, increase industrial placements for students and include progression to employment as a metric in quality assurance (4).
1.3 Student-centred learning, teaching, and assessment Standard: Institutions should ensure that the programmes are delivered in a way that encourages students to take an active role in creating the learning process, and that the assessment of students reflects this approach.	Standard 8. Curricula and academic programmes (8.4 Institutional Effectiveness: The institution offers recognized academic programmes and curricula consistent with its mission and effective in achieving the learning goals of students including required skills and degrees, diplomas,	- Students complete feedback surveys, but they are often inconsistent, and outcomes of the surveys are unclear as there is usually no formal feedback. - Students do not participate in statutory or deliberative committees. - Students are not trained to take up a role in quality assurance and are not regarded by partners in higher education by the Universities or by HEC.	ESG are student facing. Pakistani standards are institution facing. There is a will for more student facing quality assurance but standards are not orientated around this focus. (S) Students are unable to take an active role in their higher education. They have limited opportunities to influence the quality of their university. (1, 2, 3, 4, 5) Admissions and student support do not clearly take account of equality, diversity, and inclusion (6)

	and certificates. The academic quality standards are equally compatible at national and international level for the purpose of Students' and Credits' mobility and recognition. These academic quality standards are evaluated systematically, and results are used for continuous quality improvement and enhancement.)	4. No student union policy and no student councils. 5. No national survey of student opinion. 6. Quality assurance is not embedded throughout the University. Faculty members should be trained in QA processes in order to be able to play their part in quality assurance and establish a quality culture. 7. Equality, diversity, and inclusion are not considered in University QA processes 8. Research profiles are often prioritised above good teaching 9. Faculty tend to work in silos and focus on their areas of interest and research. There is poor communication between university management, faculty, QEC and students. 10. Feedback from programme evaluations (e.g. student surveys) do not result in actions such as funding resources. 11. Support does not seem to be a priority for student well-being or equality, diversity, and inclusion issues.	Study programmes do not always: • Respect and attend to the diversity of students and their needs, • Enable flexible learning paths Consider and use different modes of delivery, where appropriate • Flexibly use a variety of pedagogical methods • Regularly evaluate and adjust the modes of delivery and pedagogical methods • Encourage a sense of autonomy in the learner, while ensuring adequate guidance and support from the teacher • Promote mutual respect within the learner-teacher relationship • Have appropriate procedures for dealing with students' complaints (1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11) Standards do not always promote a quality assurance processes for assessment that takes into account the following: • Assessors are familiar with existing testing and examination methods and receive support in developing their own skills in this field • The criteria for and method of assessment as well as criteria for marking are published in advance The assessment allows students to
--	---	---	--

			demonstrate the extent to which the intended learning outcomes have been achieved. Students are given feedback, which, if necessary, is linked to advice on the learning process • Where possible, assessment is carried out by more than one examiner • The regulations for assessment take into account mitigating circumstances • Assessment is consistent, fairly applied to all students and carried out in accordance with the stated procedures • A formal procedure for student appeals is in place (S)
1.4 Student admission, progression, recognition, and certification Standard: Institutions should consistently apply pre-defined and published regulations covering all phases of the student "life cycle," e.g. student admission, progression, recognition, and certification.	Standard 6. Students (6.4 Institutional Effectiveness The institution evaluates its effectiveness systematically and consistently in admitting and retaining students and appropriateness of its student services in achieving the institutional objectives. These evaluation results are further utilized to revise the institutional goals and services and to realize the mission with	1. No standard specifically exists for all phases of the student life cycle. 2. Data should record information that can be used in internal quality assurance.	ESG are student facing. Pakistani standards are institution facing. There is a will for more student facing quality assurance but standards are not orientated around this focus. (S, 1) Standards are needed relating to at least admissions, progression, recognition, and certification. (S,1) There are usually no processes to systematically collect, monitor and action information about student progression. (2) There are no processes for the recognition of non-formal and informal learning (S)

	enhanced level of student satisfaction.)		
1.5 Teaching staff Standard: Institutions should assure themselves of the competence of their teachers. They should apply fair and transparent processes for the recruitment and development of the staff.	Standard 4. Integrity. (4.4 Institutional Effectiveness Integrity of an institution is strengthened through consistency of periodic assessments of policies & processes conveying high ethical standards observed by the institution. The integrity is not only assured but also protected with constant improvements in systems and practices by the institutional community members.) Standard 5. Faculty (5.4 Institutional Effectiveness The institution periodically evaluates the adequacy of the faculty and support provided to the faculty for its effectiveness in teaching, scholarship, research, and service consistent with institutional mission.	1. Research profiles are often prioritised above good teaching 2. Faculty tend to work in silos and focus on their areas of interest and research. There is poor communication between university management, faculty, QEC and students. 3. Faculty usually do not have recent relevant industrial experience. Selection criteria focusses on academic achievement at the expense of industrial experience. Selection does not take regard of teaching expertise. 4. Faculty research activity does not always reflect the objectives of the curriculum. 5. The concept of integrated community participation in the whole process of learning and teaching is a relatively new concept but important to achieve the desired level of quality assurance. Therefore, more efforts are needed by the QECs to introduce the concept where it does not exist previously and to make it more effective where it exists in underlying way and is	ESG are student facing. Pakistani standards are institution facing. There is a will for more student facing quality assurance but standards are not orientated around this focus. (S) Good practice is not systematically shared to encourage innovation in teaching and the use of new technologies. (1, 2) Faculty recruitment does not balance an appropriate research profile against teaching ability against industrial experience (3) On academic level there must be right balance between research and teaching, since research is essential for the development of faculty and the improvement of teaching (7) Research activity is often misaligned with the needs of the wider community (7) Student vocational objectives are not fully supported by faculty with limited recent industrial experience. (3)

	These evaluation results are used to improve the quality of faculty and its contribution to accomplish the mission of the institution)	difficult to be practiced (QA manual P28) - Students are not trained to take up a role in quality assurance and are not regarded by partners in higher education by the Universities or by HEC. - Research activity is often dislocated from the needs of the institution and the industrial needs of the wider community.	Recruitment of staff focusses on research credentials above teaching ability or industrial experience (1) Standards do not explicitly encourage higher education institutions to provide staff with a supportive environment that allows them to carry out their work effectively. Such an environment: - Sets up and follows clear, transparent, and fair processes for staff recruitment and conditions of employment that recognise the importance of teaching - Offers opportunities for and promotes the professional development of teaching staff - Encourages scholarly activity to strengthen the link between education and research - Encourages innovation in teaching methods and the use of new technology (S, 1, 2, 3, 4) - Community engagement with learning and teaching is not consistent and reflects the patchy level of stakeholder involvement in learning and teaching and quality assurance in general. (5, 6)
1.6 Learning resources and student support Standard: Institutions should have appropriate funding for learning and	Standard 5. Faculty (5.4 Institutional Effectiveness The institution periodically evaluates the adequacy	A standard is needed regarding the process to ensure appropriate funding for learning and teaching activities.	ESG are student facing. Pakistani standards are institution facing. There is a will for more student facing quality assurance but standards are not orientated around this focus. (S)

teaching activities and ensure that adequate and readily accessible learning resources and student support are provided.	of the faculty and support provided to the faculty for its effectiveness in teaching, scholarship, research, and service consistent with institutional mission. These evaluation results are used to improve the quality of faculty and its contribution to accomplish the mission of the institution) Standard 7. Institutional resources (7.4 Institutional Effectiveness The institution conducts periodic assessment of its physical, technological, information and financial resources in line with its mission, needs identified for present, and planned for future, based on rational planning and budget allocation. The adequacy, efficient utilization and impact of institutional resources is	2. Feedback from programme evaluations (e.g. student surveys) do not result in actions such as funding resources. 3. Support does not seem to be a priority for student well-being or equality, diversity, and inclusion issues.	Lack of funding for learning resources and student support (1,2,3). Student feedback on resource issues does not seem to result in action (2). Student well-being and welfare is not high on the agenda at many universities (3). Universities should have equal opportunities policy especially regarding female participation (3) Standards do not explicitly encourage Higher Education institutions to consider the needs of a diverse student population, and the shift towards student-centred learning and flexible modes of learning and teaching, when allocating, planning, and providing the learning resources and student support. (3)
---	---	---	--

	evaluated systematically. The results of these assessments are used for further improvement.) Standard 11 Student support services. (11.4 Institutional Effectiveness The institution demonstrates the development and implementation of an efficient and adequate range of student support services that help students in achieving their educational goals and facilitate the overall process of realization of institutional mission. The periodic assessment results of student support services are used for continuous improvement of the delivery and quality of these services)		
1.7 Information management Standard: Institutions should ensure that they collect, analyse, and use relevant information for	Standard 9. Public disclosure and transparency (9.4 Institutional Effectiveness A systematic process of	1. No reliable data collection system in place. What does happen is not systematic and places too much reliance on excel spreadsheets.	ESG are student facing. Pakistani standards are institution facing. There is a will for more student facing quality assurance but standards are not orientated around this focus. (S)

the effective management of their programmes and other activities.	periodic review is designed and implemented to assure that print and electronic publications of institution are adequate, complete, current, and transparent in nature and broad in scope. The results of these periodic review reports are used for improvement in Public Disclosure Policy.)	2. There is too much emphasis on quantitative data rather than qualitative data. 3. Data is often not systematically or consistently collected and does not always inform the internal quality assurance system. It is often collected to comply with an external requirement. 4. Data should record information that can be used in internal quality assurance. 5. Data is not 'owned' or routinely used by faculty and stakeholders. 6. National student database needed	Data is not systematically and consistently collected and does not always contain both qualitative and quantitative information that can be used to inform internal quality assurance or enhancement. (1, 2, 3, 4) Students and staff are not routinely involved in analysing data and developing follow-up activities that improve the quality of the students learning experience. (4, 5)
1.8 Public information Standard: Institutions should publish information about their activities, including programmes, which is clear, accurate, objective, up-to date and readily accessible	Standard 4. Integrity. (4.4 Institutional Effectiveness Integrity of an institution is strengthened through consistency of periodic assessments of policies & processes conveying high ethical standards observed by the institution. The integrity is not only assured but also protected with constant improvements in systems and practices		ESG are student facing. Pakistani standards are institution facing. There is a will for more student facing quality assurance but standards are not orientated around this focus.

	by the institutional community members.) Standard 9. Public Disclosure and Transparency. (9.4 Institutional Effectiveness. A systematic process of periodic review is designed and implemented to assure that print and electronic publications are adequate, complete, current, and transparent in nature and broad in scope. The results of these periodic review reports are used for improvement in Public Disclosure Policy).		
1.9 On-going monitoring and periodic review of programmes Standard: Institutions should monitor and periodically review their programmes to ensure that they achieve the objectives set for them and respond to the needs of students	Standard 1. Mission and goals (1.5 Institutional Effectiveness The institution demonstrates clarity and relevance of mission and conducts periodic reviews for evaluation of the content and relevance of its mission and goals and to assess their	1. Quality assurance is not embedded throughout the University. Faculty members should be trained in QA processes in order to be able to play their part in quality assurance and establish a quality culture. 2. Universities need to have a clear vision and mission that is	ESG are student facing. Pakistani standards are institution facing. There is a will for more student facing quality assurance but standards are not orientated around this focus. (S) The routine review and revision of study programmes does not explicitly enable provision to remain appropriate and create and maintain a supportive learning environment for students. (2, 3, 5)

and society. These reviews should lead to continuous improvement of the programme. Any action planned or taken as a result should be communicated to all those concerned.	effectiveness in guiding planning and resource allocation. The evaluation results are periodically reviewed so that the institution demonstrates that it has responded to reviews to improve and further enhance institutional quality and its relevance to national needs) Standard 2. Planning and evaluation. (2.6 Institutional Effectiveness The institution systematically and periodically evaluates its effectiveness in terms of its planning and evaluation activities on a continuous basis in order to achieve the desired goals. The 'results of evaluation' are used for further enhancement of the process of implementation of its mission and objectives.).	periodically reviewed to ensure its relevance. - Universities should take more responsibility for Quality assurance and should be more self-regulating. - Universities need structured guidelines to promote enhancement - The internal quality assurance process is based on conformity/compliance against the 11 standards and not enhancement - Feedback from programme evaluations (e.g. student surveys) do not result in actions	The routine review and revision of study programmes should routinely include evaluation of: - The content of the programme in the light of the latest research in the given discipline thus ensuring that the programme is up to date. - The changing needs of society - The students' workload, progression, and completion. - The effectiveness of procedures for assessment of students. - The student expectations, needs and satisfaction in relation to the programme. - The learning environment and support services and their fitness for purpose for the programme. Students and other stakeholders do not regularly review and analyse programmes to make sure that they are up to date. (1,2, 3) Student feedback is widespread and routine, but the outcomes of feedback are not communicated, and the impact of feedback is unclear (6)
--	--	--	---

	Standard 3. Organisation and governance. (3.7 Institutional Effectiveness The effectiveness of the institution's organizational structure and governance system is improved through reviews and assessments on periodic basis. These evaluation results are conveyed to administrators and faculty members and integrated in planning for the purpose of quality improvement and increased effectiveness of governance practices at the institution.)		
1.10 Cyclical external quality assurance Standard: Institutions should undergo external quality assurance in line with the ESG on a cyclical basis		1. Institutional Performance Evaluation (IPE) is carried out by 4-6 panel members and is operational, but the cyclical process is not well defined and documented. 2. There are 14 subject specific Accreditation Councils which standardise quality through the rating procedures against generic standards but there are	ESG are student facing. Pakistani standards are institution facing. There is a will for more student facing quality assurance but standards are not orientated around this focus. (S) IQA takes place every year, but cyclical EQA processes do not clearly align with this. HEC depends on QEC for information but does not visit all universities (1).

		not Councils for every subject. Newly accredited HEIs are advised to seek upfront accreditation from the relevant Accreditation Council(s) before commencement of professional degree programmes (wherever available). Accreditation in some degree programmes (e.g. medicine, engineering, architecture, law, pharmacy, nursing, veterinary) is mandatory, while it is voluntary for other degree programmes (e.g. Agriculture, Business, Computing, Teacher Education and Technology). 3. QECs are evaluated on defined parameters of Yearly Progress Report (YPR) including IPE, SA process, Accreditation, Post Graduate program Review (PGPR), Functioning of QEC Secretariat and Implementation of HEC Policies by QAA on yearly basis. On the basis of annual assessments against the given targets, the QECs performances are quantitatively assessed as satisfactory or	QA is based on internal audit with limited external input (1). QAA does not follow up issues to check if improvements/actions have taken place (1). Academic staff and students are distanced from HEC (3). HEC could focus on both quantitative and qualitative information (3). Not all programmes are accredited by an Accreditation Council and therefore not all programmes have national accreditation (2). There are no international standards or benchmarks used (1). Standards should be aligned to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGS) (2). Uncertain of the effectiveness of the QEC evaluation (3).
--	--	--	---

		unsatisfactory. On the basis of analysis of previous year's performance, the weak areas are identified and the capacity building trainings/ workshops for QECs are arranged on those areas for improvements. 4. QECs will be quality assurance units developed at all public sector universities to work independently as an integral part of these institutions (QA Manual. 2.10).	
2.1 Consideration of internal quality assurance Standard: External quality assurance should address the effectiveness of the internal quality assurance processes described in Part 1 of the ESG.		1. QAA has a mission to integrate the concept of quality assurance in higher learning with enhanced levels of international compatibility through capacity building and a vision to develop a viable and sustainable mechanism of quality assurance in higher learning sector to meet the rising challenges of transforming the country into a knowledge economy. 2. HEC is not evaluated. 3. The Standards that Institutions work to internally do not seem to be echoed in the criteria that Strategic Reviews are focussed on – as per the Template for the periodic strategic review report (QA manual P69)	External quality assurance does not always clearly link with internal quality assurance. (9, 10, 11, 13, 14) The role of the QECs could be exploited better through: embedding in faculty/schools involvement of stakeholders in QECs focus on enhancement rather than compliance (3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8)

		4. Data is collected but is not used for enhancement 5. Quality assurance is not embedded throughout the University. Faculty members should be trained in QA processes in order to be able to play their part in quality assurance and establish a quality culture. 6. Faculty tend to work in silos. There is poor communication between university management, faculty, QEC and students. 7. QECs are not empowered and can be marginalised. They are sometimes not valued by their university. QECs should have much closer links to faculty (e.g. QEC placements in faculty/schools, placement of faculty in QEC, placement of QEC in each faculty or school). 8. QECs should have student members 9. Self-evaluation takes place annually but does not lead to improvement. It is based on form filling, but the process does not result in clear enhancements. Thematic reviews might be an alternative.	
--	--	---	--

		10. The self-assessment seems repetitive and irrelevant. It does not evaluate University leadership or non-academic activities of students. 11. Universities need to have a clear vision and mission that is periodically reviewed to ensure its relevance. 12. Universities should take more responsibility for Quality assurance and should be more self-regulating. 13. Universities need structured guidelines to promote enhancement 14. The internal quality assurance process is based on conformity/compliance against the 11 standards and not enhancement.	
2.2 Designing methodologies fit for purpose Standard: External quality assurance should be defined and designed specifically to ensure its fitness to achieve the aims and objectives set for it, while taking into account relevant regulations.		1. QEC remit and role - 'The Quality Assurance Agency will develop a process of quality assurance to be implemented at the universities and DAIs through the Quality Enhancement Cells to be set up in each university as a focal point.⁹ These QECs will serve as the king pin to achieve the objective of quality learning in the universities' (QA manual 2.10).	Most stakeholders (for instance, students) are not involved in the design or period review of institutional missions. (5,6,7,8,9, 10) Most stakeholders (for instance, students) are not involved in the design of quality assurance methodologies or their continuous improvement. (2, 5,6,7,8,9)

Stakeholders should be involved in its design and continuous improvement		2. The QAA will continue to develop a framework for quality assurance and enhancement in consultation with the higher education community and other stakeholders to provide evidence based qualitative information. (QA manual 2.12) 3. The internal QA and external QA are strongly linked being complementary and integrated with each other. The internal QA is essential for external QA while external QA motivates internal QA for future developments and improvements. (QA manual. Section 5) 4. Appendix B (QA manual. Guidelines for the periodic strategic review) 5. Students complete feedback surveys, but they are often inconsistent, and outcomes of the surveys are unclear as there is usually no formal feedback. 6. Students do not participate in statutory or deliberative committees. 7. Students are not trained to take up a role in quality assurance and are not regarded by partners	
---	--	--	--

		in higher education by the Universities or by HEC. 8. No student union policy and no student councils. 9. No national survey of student opinion. 10. Universities offer programmes consistent with their mission, but the learning outcomes are not always closely linked to student and employment requirements.	
2.3 Implementing processes Standard: External quality assurance processes should be reliable, useful, pre-defined, implemented consistently and published. They include - a self-assessment or equivalent; - an external assessment normally including a site visit; - a report resulting from the external assessment; - a consistent follow-up.		1. The internal QA process largely takes place within the academic programme/ department itself. Generally, this process collects continued information in a systematic way about the quality being achieved. The Self-Assessment reports are the corner stone of the whole QA system and need to be prepared by the institutions under the guidance provided by QECs and Manual of Self-Assessment published by HEC as first documented effort to implement the quality assurance processes in the higher education institutions (QA manual 5.2) 2. Self-evaluation takes place annually but does not lead to improvement. It is based on form	There is inconsistent follow up after external review (2, 3)

		filling, but the process does not result in clear enhancements. Thematic reviews might be an alternative 3. No systematic follow up after external review	
2.4 Peer-review experts Standard: External quality assurance should be carried out by groups of external experts that include (a) student member(s).		1. Accreditation and Peer-Review are two significant tiers of external QA System to work on the base line information provided through process of internal QA. (QA manual 5.3) 2. External peer-review is employed to reach evidence-based judgements and decisions (QA manual 5.6) 3. Reviewers are recruited and trained in line with standard operating procedures and published criteria to ensure that they make an effective contribution to the process (QA manual Appendix C) 4. Students do not participate in statutory or deliberative committees. 5. Students are not trained to take up a role in quality assurance and are not regarded by partners in higher education by the Universities or by HEC.	Arrangements for external peer review are referred to as 'transitional.' Students are not part of review teams (4, 5)

2.5 Criteria for outcomes Standard: Any outcomes or judgements made as the result of external quality assurance should be based on explicit and published criteria that are applied consistently, irrespective of whether the process leads to a formal decision.		1. The specification of transitional arrangements is featured with the differentiation that developmental arrangements will not lead to accreditation decisions. The outcomes of transitional arrangements will include a judgement of reviewers as to what extent the university or institution would have met the criteria and what are the weaknesses identified for further improvements, but this outcome cannot be used as direct measure to determine accreditation status of the university or department. However, the report (Annex-Q) will identify the recommendations for further improvements and subsequent assistance to get prepared for accreditation. The weaknesses identified during the process will lead the future planning of higher education institution to make a reasonable preparation to meet the criteria of accreditation which is ultimate objective of the transitional arrangements.	Arrangements for outcomes or judgements made as the result of external quality assurance are 'transitional.' (1) There is little evidence of systematic enhancement across the sector following external review (2, 3, 4)
---	--	---	---

		- Universities need structured guidelines to promote enhancement - The internal quality assurance process is based on conformity/compliance against the 11 standards and not enhancement - Data is collected but is not used for enhancement	
2.6 Reporting Standard: Full reports by the experts should be published, clear and accessible to the academic community, external partners, and other interested individuals. If the agency takes any formal decision based on the reports, the decision should be published together with the report		- Appendix B (QA manual. Guidelines for the periodic strategic report) - QAA reports are published (QA manual. Quality Management at University Level (fig. 5.2) diagram)	
2.7 Complaints and appeals Standard: Complaints and appeals processes should be clearly defined as part of the design of external quality assurance			There is no clear process for complaints or appeals about external reviews, although there is a requirement for Institutions to have a complaints policy or equivalent.

processes and communicated to the institutions.			
3.1 Activities, policy, and processes for quality assurance: Agencies should undertake external quality assurance activities as defined in Part 2 of the ESG on a regular basis. They should have clear and explicit goals and objectives that are part of their publicly available mission statement. These should translate into the daily work of the agency. Agencies should ensure the involvement of stakeholders in their governance and work			Most stakeholders (for instance, students) are not involved in the design of quality assurance methodologies or their continuous improvement
3.2 Official status: Agencies should have an established legal basis and should be formally recognised as quality assurance agencies by competent public authorities.			

3.3 Independence: Agencies should be independent and act autonomously. They should have full responsibility for their operations and the outcomes of those operations without third party influence.			
3.4 Thematic analysis: Agencies should regularly publish reports that describe and analyse the general findings of their external quality assurance activities.			Little evidence of structured analyses across the higher education system and dissemination of developments, trends and areas of good practice or persistent difficulty.
3.5 Resources: Agencies should have adequate and appropriate resources, both human and financial, to carry out their work.		1. HEC decision making can feel dislocated from academic reality	HEC and QAA have limited resources to carry out their remit HEC and QAA do not have representation from academia or stakeholders in their developmental or deliberative committees. (1)
3.6 Internal quality assurance and professional conduct: Agencies should have in place processes for internal quality assurance related to			

defining, assuring, and enhancing the quality and integrity of their activities.			
3.7 Cyclical external review of agencies: Agencies should undergo an external review at least once every five years in order to demonstrate their compliance with the ESG.		1. HEC is not evaluated.	HEC are not evaluated (1)