



HKUSPACE

香港大學專業進修學院
HKU School of Professional and Continuing Education

QUALITY ASSURANCE

in **HKUSPACE**

2010



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HKU School of Professional and Continuing Education

Quality Assurance

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This is an abridged version of the Quality Assurance Manual. It contains the underlying policies and principles of the Quality Assurance System in HKU SPACE



The cover photograph of engaged gearwheels is a metaphor for the teamwork, cooperation and continuous progress that are the hallmarks of our quality assurance policy development.

Every effort has been made to ensure that the information contained in this document is correct at the time of printing. HKU SPACE may make changes in its guidelines and procedures.

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Foreword

HKU SPACE is committed to professionalism and academic excellence in continuing education. The School's Quality Assurance System was formalized and implemented for all programmes and courses in 1999 and is encapsulated in the QA Manual. It is a reference document that describes the QA System which is in place to ensure the quality of all programme activities.

In the past years, various external reviews and audits have recognized that the School's operations are well underpinned by our robust QA System. Reports of these external reviews and audits have reaffirmed the School's leading position in the provision of quality professional and continuing education in Hong Kong, China Mainland, and the region. These reviews and audits have also provided us with the opportunity to review our QA work and enhance the quality of the work output.

Building on our QA experience throughout the past decade, and making use of both internal consultation and external reviews, the School recently conducted a comprehensive internal review of the QA System. The review reinforced the guiding principles of quality assurance, informed streamlining of work procedures and promoted good practices. The review also took into consideration the latest development of the School, including the School re-organization, and the implementation of the Hong Kong Qualifications Framework System. The outcomes of the QA System review have been consolidated in the production of the Third Edition of the QA Manual. The revised QA System will continue to play a key role in achieving the core values of the School and in fulfilling its mission and its strategic development. To facilitate a general understanding of the QA System, the School has also prepared this abridged version.

With a commitment to continual improvement, the School welcomes comments and suggestions from readers of this document.

Professor C F Lee
Director
School of Professional and Continuing Education
The University of Hong Kong

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

1. Vision

In fulfilling the University of Hong Kong's mission in extending lifelong learning opportunities for the community, HKU SPACE seeks to become a world-class centre of excellence for the provision of professional and continuing education serving Hong Kong, Mainland China and the region.

2. Mission and Values

HKU SPACE strives for excellence in:

- Collaborating with other parts of the University of Hong Kong and other institutions in expanding lifelong learning opportunities for career advancement and personal development
- Delivering high-quality programmes to meet the needs of society, particularly in human resources development
- Promoting lifelong learning for the realisation of a learning society and the community's pursuit of quality of life
- Conducting research in adult and continuing education, as well as in subject specialisms
- Playing a leading role in Hong Kong's development as an education hub

HKU SPACE places particular value on:

- **Service** to learners, employers and community
- **Partnerships** both internally and externally
- **Accountability** to stakeholders with professionalism and integrity
- **Creativity** in teaching and learning
- **Excellence** in quality

The School's portfolio has traditionally included a very large number of short courses of general interest, and a wide range of basic introductory programmes in many fields. In the past decade, the School has responded to student demand

by developing an extensive hierarchy of award-bearing programmes. Some programmes lead to awards at certificates and diplomas while others lead to higher levels including associate degrees and postgraduate diplomas. All award-bearing programmes lead to awards within the HKU system through HKU SPACE. Some other programmes are offered collaboratively with a cognate HKU Faculty while others involve collaboration with an external partner such as professional bodies and non-local higher education institutions. These external partnerships lead to awards of the external body.

3. Objectives of the Quality Assurance System

The objectives of the Quality Assurance System in HKU SPACE are:

- To support the mission of HKU SPACE by ensuring the high quality of the programmes and teaching and learning support services;
- To facilitate and co-ordinate the continuous enhancement of the quality of programmes and teaching and learning support services;
- To ensure consistency and effectiveness in quality assurance activities;
- To establish the role for all parties concerned in quality assurance activities.

4. Quality Assurance Mechanisms and Manual

With a long established reputation for quality programmes, the School places significant emphasis on maintaining and enhancing the academic and professional standards of all programmes and teaching and learning support services offered by means of:

- strict validation and review of programme design and contents;
- recruitment and retention of well-qualified staff and strict monitoring of teaching quality;
- arrangement of excellent facilities for teaching and learning;
- careful moderation of overall academic standard including graduation standard through the use of Academic Assessors, External Examiners and Boards of Examiners;
- regular monitoring of programmes by Academic Committees of relevant subject groups, who shall report to College Academic Board for information or action where appropriate.

The development of the Quality Assurance Manual aims to provide a School-wide reference and understanding of the ways and means to carry out quality assurance activities. The procedures and activities in the Manual have all undergone consultation with colleagues and have been approved by the HKU SPACE Quality Assurance Committee and the Board for Continuing and Professional Education and Lifelong Learning. Whatever procedures are applied, the specific needs and circumstances of the programmes are always taken into account.

The School also prepares this abridged version of the Manual to facilitate general understanding of the Quality Assurance System. When making reference to this document, the reader is invited to note that quality assurance is an evolving process. New procedures and guidelines will be approved and promulgated by the School from time to time, with a view to ensuring that they serve their purpose and are in line with development in the School. The HKU SPACE Quality Assurance Team welcomes comments and feedback on the Manual, as this will contribute to the further refinement of our Quality Assurance System.

CHAPTER 2

The Structure of the Quality Assurance System

1. Development of the Quality Assurance System

To facilitate the smooth functioning of quality assurance activities, HKU SPACE has developed and formalised a Quality Assurance System (QA System). The System is built on the basis of existing good practices and has consolidated these into a hierarchy of actions and procedural guidelines. It deals with both award-bearing and professional programmes and short or general interest courses. [Appendix A](#) depicts the structure of the QA System.

In 1997, HKU SPACE set up a Quality Assurance Task Force, with representatives of academic colleagues to initiate action on developing the System. In late 1998, the Task Force was developed into the Quality Assurance Process Working Group.

The Working Group consolidated the good practices in quality assurance and has formalised the programme validation, approval, monitoring and review procedures to establish a School-wide System. The System was endorsed by the Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) and was introduced in phases since 1999 with implementation in full fledge in 2000.

The QA System had been put to challenge when the School underwent three external reviews of which two were conducted in 2002 and one in 2007. The first was the review commissioned by the HKU Council for the whole of the School. The second was the Teaching and Learning Quality Process Review conducted for all institutions funded by the University Grants Committee. The third external review was the Institutional Review undertaken by the Joint Quality Review Committee, covering the sub-degree programmes delivered by the School.

These external reviews re-affirmed the purposes and direction of the HKU SPACE QA System, and concluded with extremely positive and encouraging reports on the System.

2. Activities and Procedures in the Quality Assurance System

The QA System is designed to cover the full process of planning, approving, delivering, modifying and reviewing a programme of study. This includes the quality management of programme design, programme operation and teaching quality. The intention is to ensure high quality in all aspects of a programme such that the programme is conducted in accordance with the required standard of its award.

3. Quality Assurance Committee (QAC)

The QAC reports through the HKU SPACE Director to the Board for Continuing and Professional Education and Lifelong Learning (Board for CPE&LL). The **powers and duties** of the QAC are:

- (1) To promote a culture of quality assurance in the academic activities of HKU SPACE.
- (2) To develop quality assurance policies and mechanisms.
- (3) To oversee and monitor the implementation of quality assurance policies and mechanisms, including programme validation, modification, monitoring and review, as follows:
 - (a) to establish and maintain the HKU SPACE Quality Assurance Manual to ensure dissemination of, and compliance with, best practice in the delivery of lifelong learning opportunities to the community;
 - (b) to receive reports from College Academic Boards concerning programme monitoring on
 - (i) non-award bearing programmes
 - (ii) award-bearing programmesand to select a sample of such reports annually for detailed review and to take follow up action as necessary to maintain the objectives of the School's quality assurance policies;
 - (c) to oversee the work of Programme Validation Panels to consider proposals for new institutional collaboration and new programmes;
 - (d) to oversee the work of Programme Review Panels regarding review of existing programmes;

- (e) to audit reports on modifications of programmes from Academic Committees.
- (4) To advise on the framework of academic levels and equivalence of programmes.
- (5) To report periodically to the Board for CPE&LL and to present to the Board an annual report on quality assurance in HKU SPACE.
- (6) To liaise with University bodies on quality assurance policy and procedures as necessary.
- (7) To perform any other duties relating to quality assurance as requested by the Director or the Board for CPE&LL.

The QAC consists of the following **members**:

- Chairman: Director of HKU SPACE or a Deputy Director nominated by the Director
- Members: Director, HKU SPACE
Deputy Directors, HKU SPACE
Six HKU SPACE academic staff appointed by the Director
Two senior HKU faculty academics invited by the Chairman of the Board for CPE&LL
Co-opted members as necessary
- In attendance: School Secretary & Registrar, HKU SPACE
Quality Assurance Director, HKU SPACE (Committee Secretary)

4. Quality Assurance Process Working Group (QAPWG)

While the QAC takes charge of developing quality assurance policies and mechanisms, it has delegated to the QAPWG the work of initial design of relevant policies and mechanisms. The Working Group is chaired by the Deputy Director (Academic) who is responsible for quality assurance and is made up of academic colleagues with rich experience in quality assurance and programme management. The Working Group carries out vetting and consideration of draft QA policies and procedures, and decides on operational QA procedures. The Terms of Reference of QAPWG are shown in Appendix B.

5. Quality Assurance Team

To support and co-ordinate quality assurance activities in HKU SPACE, a Quality Assurance Team (QA Team) has been set up with a team of core staff reporting directly to the Deputy Director (Academic). The QA Team assists the QAC in overseeing and monitoring the implementation of quality assurance policies and mechanisms. Working closely with academic colleagues, the QA Team serves as a facilitator to all quality assurance activities. Its work includes drafting policies and guidelines for incorporation into the QA Manual, providing secretarial support to the QAC, its Working Group and all programme validation panels, as well as conducting Learning Experience Survey and assisting in handling complaints.

6. Responsibility of Colleges in regard to Quality Assurance

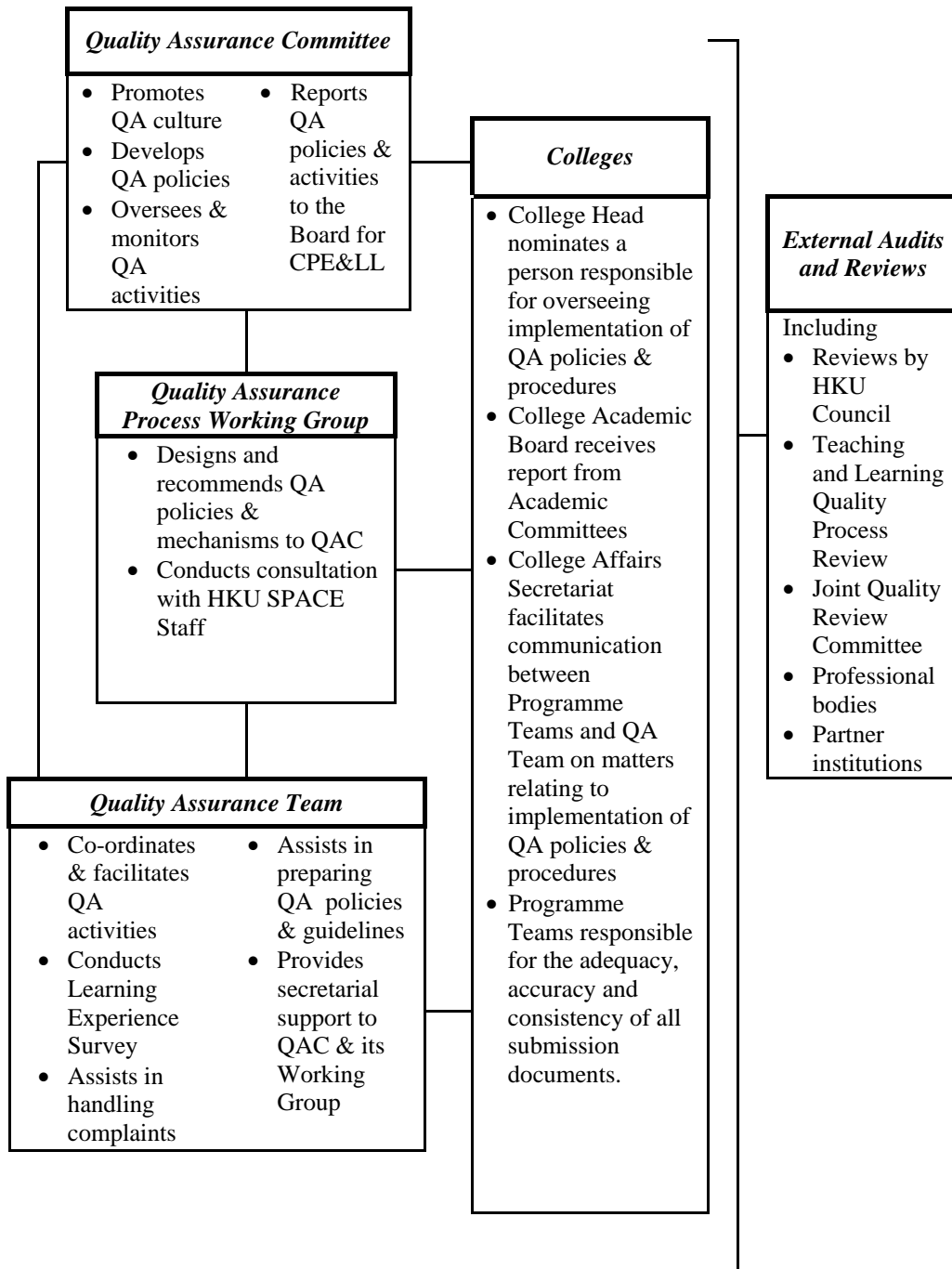
With the reorganisation of the School in late 2007, the formation of Colleges facilitates devolution of QA responsibilities to the academic unit level. Colleges are expected to play an important role in different process in the QA System. College Heads are responsible for all quality assurance in the colleges through their leadership role. Each College Head shall nominate a person at Associate Head level to be responsible for overseeing implementation of QA policies and procedures for respective College.

The College Academic Board (CAB) provides a forum for senior programme staff in each College to monitor and oversee the implementation of QA activities governing development and management of programmes and courses under the College. The Terms of Reference of CAB are in Appendix C.

The College Affairs Secretariat will facilitate the communication between Programme Teams and the QA Team on matters relating to implementation of QA policies and procedures in respective college.

The Programme Teams shall be responsible for the adequacy, accuracy and consistency of all submission documents that are prepared in accordance with relevant QA procedures, guidelines and policies.

The Structure of the Quality Assurance System



**THE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG
SCHOOL OF PROFESSIONAL AND CONTINUING EDUCATION**

Quality Assurance Process Working Group
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Terms of Reference

1. To design initially quality assurance policies and mechanisms and to make recommendations to the Quality Assurance Committee.
2. To develop and recommend procedures for implementation of the Quality Assurance System, and to make recommendations to the Quality Assurance Committee.
3. To conduct internal consultation with School staff in relation to quality assurance policies and procedures.
4. To carry out tasks assigned by the Quality Assurance Committee.

Membership

Chairman:	Deputy Director (Academic)
Members:	Two academic staff nominated by the Head of each College Co-opted members as necessary
Secretary:	Quality Assurance Director

**THE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG
SCHOOL OF PROFESSIONAL AND CONTINUING EDUCATION**

College Academic Board

Terms of Reference

1. To consider and approve, for consideration by SAM, new programme proposals from the subject group leaders;
2. To monitor the quality assurance of programmes offered by the College according to the School's Quality Assurance policies and to report thereon to the QAC;
3. To receive reports from the Academic Committees;
4. To monitor the implementation of annual College academic development plan; and
5. To advise the College Head on the College Annual Development Plan each year for submission to the Director.

Colleges may have sectional Boards if appropriate: e.g. Law, Social Sciences, Arts, Chinese Medicine.

Membership

Chairman:	College Head
Members:	College Associate Heads Subject Group leaders in the College Other College staff by invitation as required
Secretary:	College Affairs Secretary
Frequency of Meeting:	Monthly or as required

CHAPTER 3

Academic Collaboration

1. Introduction

In addition to programmes developed by the School, HKU SPACE has established academic and non-academic collaboration partnerships with other academic units in The University of Hong Kong, as well as local and non-local universities and organisations.

Academic collaboration refers to partnership or joint efforts in the **development, management and/or delivery of programmes** by HKU SPACE and its partners. Academic collaboration occurs in programmes offered jointly by HKU SPACE and the partner in or outside Hong Kong, upon completion of which the student will be conferred an award through HKU SPACE, by the external partner or jointly conferred by both parties.

Collaboration programmes include:

- programmes commissioned by and recognised by local organisations, government departments and professional bodies (Customised Programmes)
- programmes developed (or adapted) and delivered in collaboration with cognate academic units at the HKU
- programmes developed (or adapted) and delivered in collaboration with local or non-local higher education institutions or organisations

Non-Academic partnerships refer to collaborations in respect of teaching venues and facilities. Such collaborations should be in consultation with the Directorate, the School Secretary and Registrar and the Director of Finance.

2. Academic Collaboration Partners

Partners that are academic units within HKU are regarded as **internal partners**, while those outside HKU are regarded as **external partners**. The various categories of external partners include academic units in:

- local and non-local universities and academic institutions;

- local and non-local professional bodies;
- departments of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government;
- other local and non-local organisations.

Academic collaboration with different subject groups in an institution is taken as individual partnerships and is subjected to separate scrutiny. Hence an academic unit in an institution collaborating with HKU SPACE for the first time is considered as a **new partner**. The quality assurance procedures are fully applied to new partners.

3. Guiding Principles for Academic Collaboration

The prime consideration for any academic collaboration is that the **academic quality** of HKU SPACE must be maintained. When setting up a partnership, HKU SPACE observes the following guiding principles:

- (1) The academic collaboration is in line with the mission and academic activities of HKU and HKU SPACE.
- (2) The policies and regulations of HKU and HKU SPACE in academic, financial and related aspects will be followed.
- (3) There is clear commitment of both partners to quality assurance of the academic standards of the programme.
- (4) There is academic input from HKU SPACE in the development and conduct of the programme.
- (5) The academic collaboration brings about academic enhancement to HKU SPACE.
- (6) The academic collaboration Agreement is formulated in comprehensive and documented details.
- (7) The academic collaboration abides by the laws of Hong Kong, of the home country of the partner, and of the location where the programme is to be conducted.

4. Procedures for Setting up an Academic Partnership

The Programme Team is primarily responsible for the development of an academic collaboration. The HKU SPACE Directorate and other academic staff are involved in different stages of the negotiation process to ensure that the academic collaboration agreement will provide the most academically rewarding

outcome. The Board for Continuing and Professional Education and Lifelong Learning (Board for CPE&LL) gives the final approval for academic collaboration.

The procedures include (Appendix A):

- (1) Academic Partner and Programme Selection: In selecting the appropriate partner and programme, the Programme Team gathers and examines relevant information including the partner's mission, history, academic and professional standing, financial status, and quality assurance arrangements. Records of the programme concerned and cognate programmes conducted by the partner in the past are also taken into consideration. Prior to any negotiation with a potential partner institution, programme teams have to report via the College Head, any intended academic collaboration to the Directorate for information.
- (2) Academic Collaboration Approval: The intended academic collaboration should be first endorsed by the relevant College Academic Board (CAB) and then submitted to the School Academic and Management Board (SAM) for approval. The new partnership will then be considered by academic and professional expertise at the Programme Validation Panel (PVP) meeting established by the Chairman of the Quality Assurance Committee (QAC). The recommendation made by the PVP is presented via the QAC Chairman to the Board for CPE&LL for final approval.

Where the School has already established institutional level partnership agreement with an institution, or the institution is included in the list of institutions approved by SAM, the above approval process for proposed academic collaboration can be simplified. In both circumstances above, after the CAB endorsed the proposed academic collaboration, there is no need for the submission of the academic collaboration proposal to the SAM, PVP, QAC and Board for CPE&LL. The academic collaboration approval will be made by the Head of the College which houses the programme, or by Heads of the Colleges if a programme jointly offered by two Colleges in the School.

- (3) Programme Design and Development: The programme under consideration is expected to complement those already offered in HKU SPACE in terms of subject group, level of study and teaching mode. Should the programme be adopted from an existing non-local programme offered by the partner, the Programme Team works together with the partner to introduce appropriate local materials into the curriculum, and to agree on how quality assurance mechanism is applied to the collaborative programme.
- (4) Legal and Financial Consultation: For collaborative programmes leading to the award of a non-local higher academic/professional qualification by a non-local partner, compliance with the Non-local Higher and Professional Education (Regulation) Ordinance is necessary. As a local higher education

institution, HKU is eligible to seek exemption from registration under the Ordinance. In cases where the programme is offered by HKU SPACE outside Hong Kong, appropriate local authorisation or registration procedures have to be followed.

The Programme Team is required to confirm the financial arrangements in consultation with the HKU SPACE Director of Finance and the School Secretary and Registrar (SS&R) prior to the formalisation of any partnership.

- (5) Agreement: When an academic collaboration agreement is reached with an external partner, an Agreement is signed by the authorised persons of both parties. The SS&R will consider the contents of the Agreement and advise the Programme Team on it before it is signed by the HKU SPACE Director.

With the implementation of the Quality Assurance System in HKU SPACE, HKU has endorsed that approval for new programme proposals involving academic collaboration with non-local institutions leading to the award of the latter be delegated to the Board for CPE&LL. HKU SPACE will present an annual report on all the joint programmes approved under this mechanism to the Academic Board for information.

5. Collaboration, Programme Monitoring and Review

As with all award-bearing programmes offered by HKU SPACE, programmes offered in academic collaboration are subject to the programme monitoring and review procedures under the HKU SPACE quality assurance mechanisms. The academic collaboration arrangement is included in the programme review process. The review outcome serves to improve the quality of both the collaboration and the programme concerned.

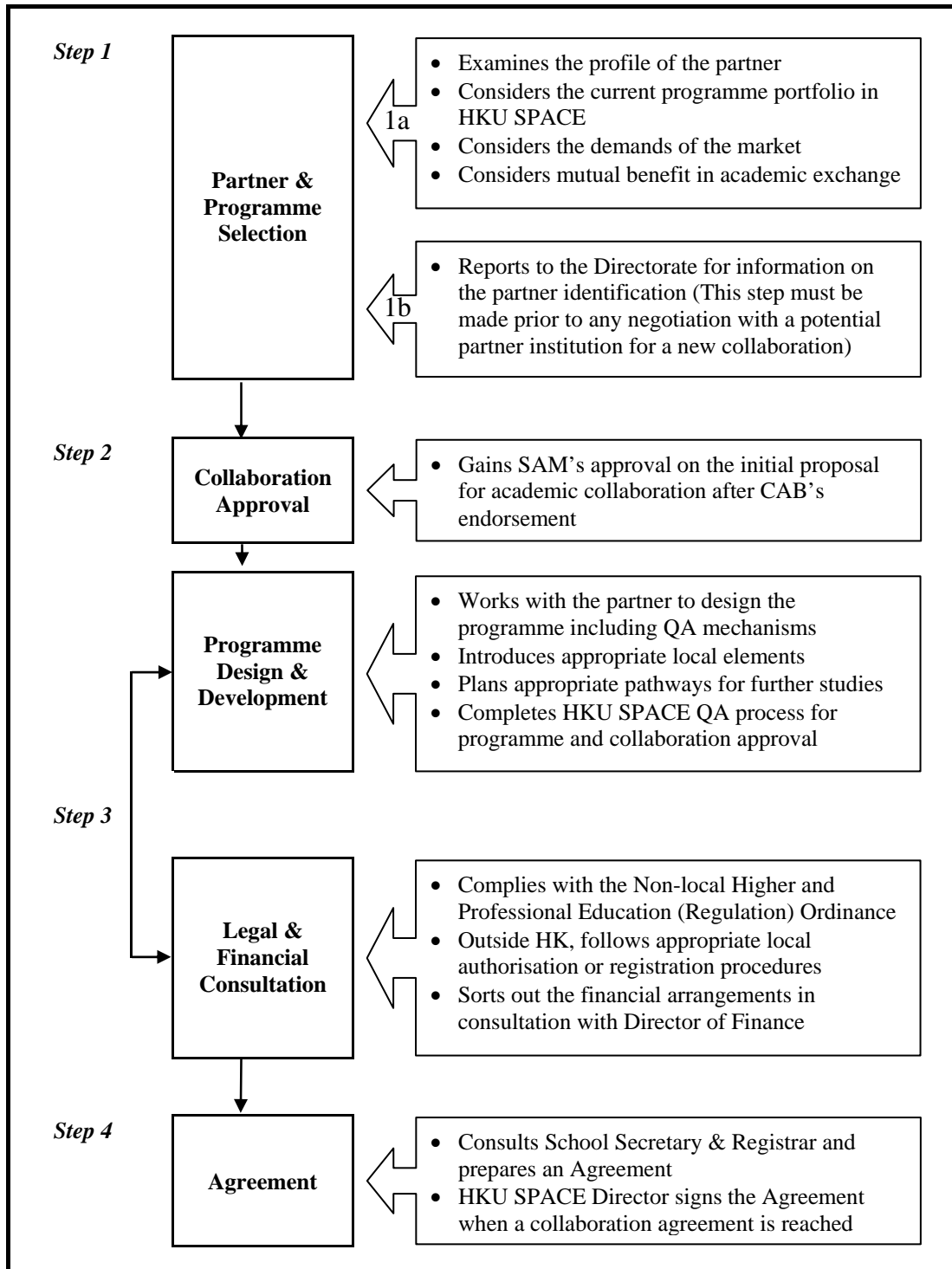
6. Guidelines for Internal Communication for Potential Academic Collaboration

The following guidelines are adopted for internal communication for programme collaboration:

- (1) Informal communication is at the commencement of the programme development process to explore and identify academic collaboration possibilities, sharing of academic expertise and resources.
- (2) Formal communication is made at the college/ unit meetings. This process is to provide a formal and structured forum for discussion among relevant programme staff from different colleges/ subject groups..

- (3) The formal communication should be recorded in the programme proposal to be submitted to the SAM for information and consideration.

Procedures for Setting up an Academic Collaboration



CHAPTER 4

Programme Development and Approval

1. Introduction

The programme development and approval process covers both award-bearing and non-award bearing programmes. Before admitting any student, a programme must undergo a formal process of programme development and **academic approval** (often referred to as ‘validation’) given in Figure 1. The purpose is to ensure that the academic standard of the programme and the quality of student learning opportunities are comparable with similar programmes within the School, across Hong Kong and internationally.

The validation process will also apply to a new programme which is developed from an “existing” programme, where over 25% of the programme content of the new programme differs from its “parent”.

2. Qualifications

2.1 Qualifications Framework

The hierarchy and the awards therein make necessary reference to the School’s Qualifications Framework (QF) System for ensuring consistency in recognition of academic and professional achievement. The QF is referenced to in the application of quality assurance processes, both in the cases of awards offered through HKU SPACE and of awards granted by partner institutions.

The definition of a qualification is made through stipulation of three critical factors:

award title + exit level + number of credits

2.2 Award Titles

The award title (both English and Chinese) proposed for a new programme is considered and given approval during the **programme validation** process.

2.3 Professional Awards

A programme may be prefixed as a **professional award**, such as a professional certificate, when there is recognition of the programme learning outcome by professional bodies, for the purpose of membership registration or exemption from professional qualifying examinations.

2.4 Intermediate Awards

There are certain programmes designed with a hierarchy of awards where completion of an earlier part leads to an **intermediate award** and completion of the programme comprising both the earlier and later parts leads to a higher level award. Such programme structure design provides flexibility of entry and exit points. In all cases, double reward of credits leading to double awards should be avoided.

A maximum period of registration on the programme is specified such that the intermediate award is governed by a “validity (or eligibility) period” within which a student holding an intermediate award may be allowed to continue with the later part of the programme to achieve the final award. Six years will be a usual “validity period”, except for subjects of rapid development for which a shorter period may be more appropriate. The eligibility of an intermediate award holder to subscribe to the later part of the programme also depends on whether there is any change in the curriculum and on the availability of the programme.

2.5 Awarding Body

For programmes developed and conducted entirely by HKU SPACE, the awards are awarded within the HKU system through HKU SPACE.

For programmes involving collaboration with an external partner, the award title and the awarding body are agreed by both parties in the programme development process and included in programme validation and approval.

2.6 Conferment of Awards

Notwithstanding the versatility of continuing education, it is vital that awards are only conferred to students upon the students’ successful fulfilment of all stipulated assessment and graduation requirements, as well as achievement of intended learning outcomes.

2.7 Certification and Award Documents

Despite the large variety of its programmes and awards, HKU SPACE adopts standard formats for its award documents. The standard format

serves to provide an official and quality presentation of awards for HKU SPACE award-bearing programmes.

For programmes that do not have an academic award, HKU SPACE issues Statements of Attendance and Statements of Achievement.

Where the awarding body is an external partner, students receive the partner's award document.

Figure 1

Award-Bearing Programme Validation and Approval: Authorisation Routes

Responsible Parties	HKU SPACE Programmes		Collaborative Award-Bearing Programmes	
	Awards at QF Level 3 and Below	Awards at QF Level 4 and Above	Partnering with other academic units in HKU	Partnering with other institutions and organisations
Programme Team	⊕	⊕	⊕	⊕
College Academic Board, or equivalent	⌘	#	#	#
School Academic and Management Board	★	#	#	#
Programme Validation Panel		⌘	⌘ (By Relevant Faculty Board or Committee)	⌘
Quality Assurance Committee	◇	◇	◇	◇
Board for Continuing and Professional Education & Lifelong Learning	◇	★	◇	★
Senate/ Academic Board			★	◇

Key:

- | | |
|-------------------------|------------------------------|
| ⊕ Proposal | # Approval-in-Principle |
| ⌘ Main scrutiny process | ◇ Receiving annual reporting |
| ★ Authorisation | |

3. Programme Validation and Approval: Authorisation Routes

The following gives the authorisation routes for different types of programmes and courses.

3.1 Non-Award Bearing Courses

For non-award bearing courses, the College Academic Board (CAB) gives the authorisation for introduction.

For commissioned and short courses, in response to competitive tender of the government, they can be endorsed by the College Head/ Head of academic unit concerned for submission to tender. If the course is proposed by the College Head/ Head of academic unit, the QAC Chairman or the relevant Directorate member overseeing the college/ unit will endorse the course for submission.

3.2 Award-Bearing Programmes

QF Level	Common Award Types
2:	Certificate/ Intermediate Certificate/ Foundation Certificate/
3:	Diploma/ Higher Certificate/ Advanced Certificate/ Advanced Professional Certificate/ Professional Certificate

Programmes at QF level 2 to 3 require support by the CAB and approval by the School Academic and Management Board (SAM), and will be listed for the information of the Board for Continuing and Professional Education and Lifelong Learning (Board for CPE&LL) at the end of an academic year.

QF Level	Common Award Types
4:	Associate Degree/ Higher Diploma/ Advanced Diploma/ Professional Diploma
5:	Honours Degree/ Graduate Diploma/ Graduate Certificate/ Ordinary Degree/ Advanced Professional Diploma
6:	Master's Degree/ Postgraduate Diploma/ Postgraduate Certificate
7:	Doctorate Degree

Programmes at QF level 4 to 7 first gain **approval-in-principle** via the relevant CAB and then the SAM, as part of the School's development planning process.

After approval-in-principle, an intensive period of planning, consultation and curriculum development follows to prepare a new programme, or to adapt a partner's existing programme.

New programmes at QF level 4 and above are referred to a Programme Validation Panel (PVP) for detailed scrutiny. Programmes offered in collaboration with an academic unit in HKU with the award granted by the partner unit are normally subject to necessary approval procedures governing the partner unit in HKU.

The PVP reports its conclusions to the Board for CPE&LL. The Board takes the authority from the HKU Senate to authorise approval of programmes at QF level 4 and above.

Part-time programmes at QF level 4 and above should normally obtain final academic approval from the Board for CPE&LL at least 3 months prior to commencement of the first class of a programme. For programmes at QF level 3 and below, more flexibility could be exercised so as to be more responsive to market needs.

Full-time programmes should normally obtain final academic approval from the Board for CPE&LL not later than January of the same calendar year.

An annual record of award-bearing programme approval at all QF levels is made to the Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) and the Board for CPE&LL.

4. Validation and Approval Procedures of Award-Bearing Programmes

4.1 Preliminary Stage

The preliminary proposal for programmes at all QF levels together with the Outline Course Budget Proforma and the **Qualifications Framework Level and Credit Assignment Form (QF1 Form)** Parts 1 and 2 are submitted to the relevant CAB for consideration and support, and then to the SAM for approval-in-principle.

The preliminary proposal to be presented to the CAB and the SAM is expected to contain an outline or synopsis on the major aspects of the programme, including award title in English and Chinese, full-time equivalent, QF level and credits, rationale for launching the programme, target students, programme structure, mode of delivery, assessment methods and alignment with intended learning outcomes and so on.

An Internal Consultative Committee (ICC) is established as a sub-committee of the SAM for information exchange and consultation. Programmes approved by the CAB will be taken to the ICC for internal consultation. Highlights of the communication at the ICC will be included in the proposal document submitted to the SAM.

“Approval-in-principle” of the budget should be sought from the Budget Vetting Panel (BVP) prior to the SAM meeting. Similarly, the QF1 Form

(Parts 1 to 3 for QF level 3 and below programmes, and Parts 1 and 2 for QF level 4 and above) should be forwarded to the School Vetting Committee before the SAM consideration. For programmes at QF level 3 and below, Part 3 of the QF1 Form should also be considered by the CAB before submission to the School Vetting Committee. QA Team will send both the budget proposal and QF1 Form to the Finance Team and Registry Affairs Team for respective actions once they are received from the Programme Team.

After approval at the SAM, a proposed programme leading to an exit award at QF level 3 and below may be launched. This is also subject to the approval of the detailed budgets by the BVP. A proposed programme leading to an award at QF level 4 and above will need further vetting as described in Section 4.2 below.

For the purpose of ensuring good communication between the School and faculties in HKU, a **Joint Consultative Committee (JCC)** is formed by the Senate. The preliminary programme proposal after the SAM support should be taken to the JCC for information exchange. The JCC will forward its views on the programme proposal to the Board for CPE&LL.

4.2 Detailed Validation Stage

The detailed validation of award-bearing programmes at QF level 4 and above will proceed as outlined below. At the same time, the Programme Team prepares a Detailed Course Budget Proposal for the BVP's approval.

4.2.1 HKU SPACE Programmes at QF Level 4 and above

- (a) The Programme Team develops a detailed programme proposal, and prepares QF1 Form Part 3 for all modules for vetting by the School Vetting Committee.
- (b) The QAC Secretary convenes a meeting of the PVP to consider the proposal and to discuss it with the Programme Team.
- (c) If the PVP agrees to recommend the programme for further approval, the QAC Chairman endorses approval upon receiving a written report from the PVP, and requests the Board for CPE&LL for approval.
- (d) The Board for CPE&LL gives the final academic approval.

4.2.2 New and Existing Programmes in Collaboration with an Academic Unit in The University of Hong Kong

- (a) The Programme Team (HKU SPACE and staff of the partnering unit) prepares a detailed programme proposal and

notifies both the QAC and the Faculty Board (FB) or a relevant committee for the unit.

- (b) The FB/ relevant committee undertakes scrutiny.
- (c) The FB or relevant committee recommends approval (or conditional approval) to the Academic Board and the Senate (co-ordination with the FB or relevant committee on making a joint submission).
- (d) The Academic Board/Senate considers recommendations of the FB or relevant committee, and authorises delivery.
- (e) An annual reporting is made to the QAC and the Board for CPE&LL.

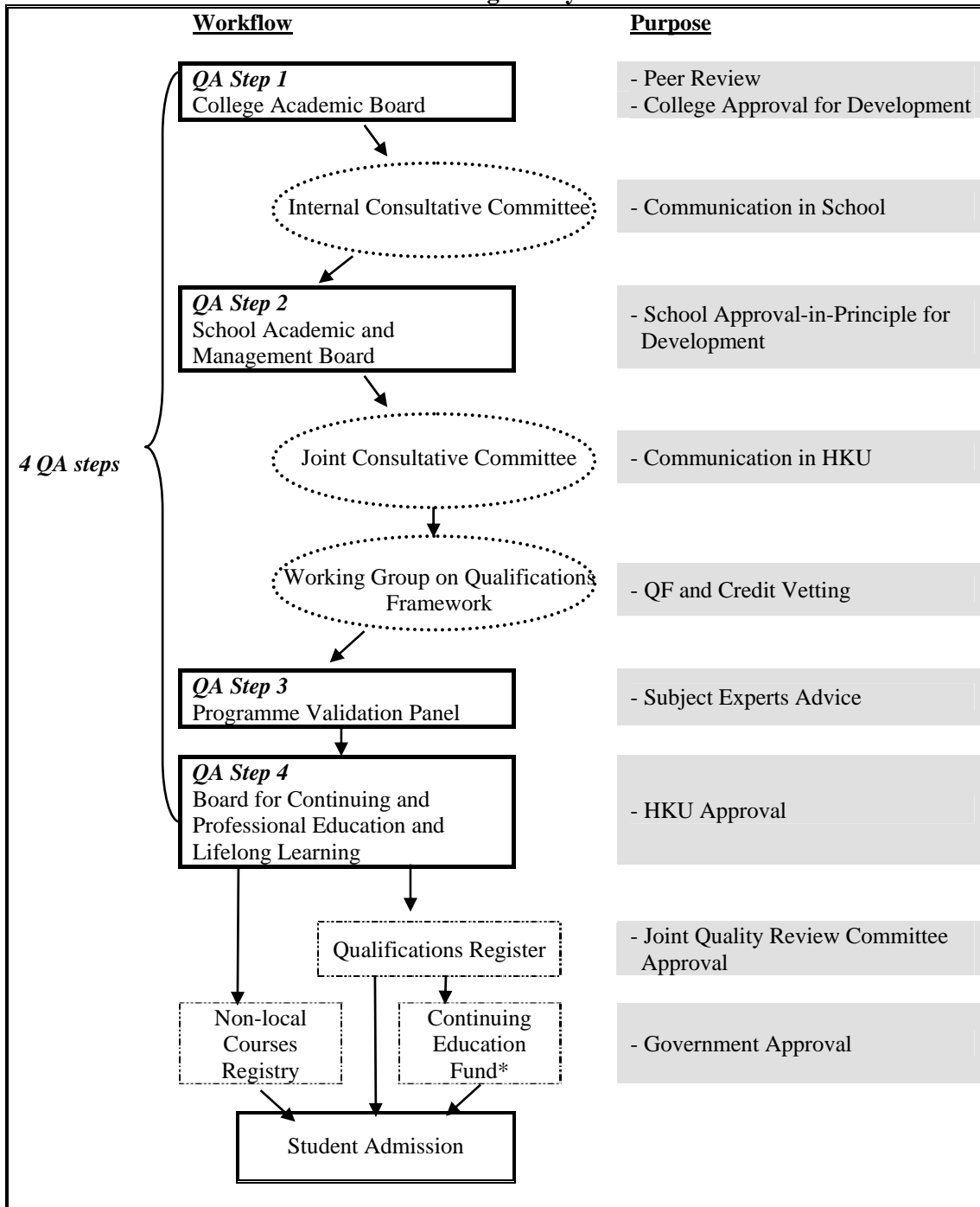
4.2.3 Collaborative Provision, Awarded (or Jointly Awarded) by an External Partner

- (a) For a new partner, the PVP receives information on the approval given by the SAM on the proposed partnership.
- (b) The Programme Team (HKU SPACE and partner institution staff) prepares a detailed proposal for collaborative delivery of a new programme.
- (c) The QAC Secretary convenes a PVP meeting to consider the proposal for the programme, and discuss it with the Programme Team.
- (d) If the PVP agrees to recommend the programme for further approval, the QAC Chairman endorses approval upon receiving a written report from the PVP, plus the approval of the partnership given by the SAM, and requests the Board for CPE&LL for approval.
- (e) The Board for CPE&LL gives the final academic approval of the partnership and the programme.

A summary of the integration of quality assurance, communication and government regulatory processes is given in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2

Integration of Quality Assurance, Communication and Government Regulatory Processes



The different stage(s) required for approving new programmes are:

- Step 1 Short Courses
- Steps 1 - 2 Award-bearing Programmes at QF Level 3 and below
- Steps 1 - 4 Award-bearing Programmes at QF Level 4 and above

* Programmes or courses which want to register as CEF reimbursable courses would require prior successful uploading on the Qualifications Register.

5. Procedures of the Programme Validation Panel

5.1 Formation of the Panel

A PVP is set up by the QAC Chairman with details as follows.

- a. Chairman (QAC Chairman or QAC member)
- b. HKU SPACE academic (from a different College in the School)
- c. HKU faculty academic (from a cognate faculty or academic unit in HKU)
- d. Two external specialists (from HK or elsewhere, with academic and/or practitioner expertise)
- e. Panel Officer (QAC Secretary)

The Programme Team may nominate members of the PVP from other HKU academic units, other higher education institutions or professional bodies. For programmes at QF level 5 and above, at least one of the two external specialists is an academic from other universities. The Panel Officer must check any potential conflict of interest. The membership is subject to the approval of the QAC Chairman.

5.2 Documentation

The Programme Team must pass to the Panel Officer the programme proposal document that contains details on all academic and academic-related aspects of the programme.

The Officer then circulates the following items to each panel member:

- a. Panel Membership
- b. Rundown of Meeting (if a meeting is being held)
- c. Programme Proposal Document (and exemplary distance learning materials, if relevant)
- d. Notes for Panel Members on Procedures and Objectives of the Validation Process
- e. Any Other Relevant Information

5.3 Panel Meeting

The rundown includes:

- a. Introductory briefing (by Panel Chairman)
- b. Meeting with Programme Team
 - brief presentation of the partnership by Programme Team
 - brief presentation and highlights of the proposed programme by Programme Team

- discussion and clarification with Programme Team, with particular reference to curriculum academic standard, staffing, teaching and learning, assessment, resources, management, quality assurance
 - inspection of materials (if not already circulated)
- c. Panel private meeting to agree on conclusions which may include
- whether the programme is recommended for introduction, or otherwise
 - any condition(s) of approval which the Programme Team must fulfil
 - any recommendation(s) for refining the programme which the Programme Team is invited to consider
 - period of approval (if advised by the Panel) after which a programme review should take place
 - any other relevant advice/suggestions

Should circumstances be that the Panel does not agree to recommend the programme and requests for substantial revision of the programme, further meetings may be arranged for the Programme Team to re-submit the programme proposal or part of the proposal for the Panel's re-consideration. Re-consideration may also be arranged by circulation of the revised proposal or part of the proposal.

5.4 After the Validation Exercise

The Panel Officer drafts and sends a written Report to the Programme Team for confirming factual accuracy and for inviting a written response to the Panel's conditions and recommendations.

The Report is NOT expected to record all the discussion in detail. It should be succinct, but it must include brief notes of the main issues discussed and statement of approval/ non-approval, plus conditions and recommendations made by the Panel.

The Programme Team must prepare a response to the decision of the Panel including the conditions of approval and recommendations, and submit the response to the Panel Chairman via the Panel Officer. The Panel Chairman issues the Report and the Programme Team's response to the Panel for consideration. If the Report and the response of the Programme Team are considered satisfactory by the Panel, the Panel Chairman endorses the report on behalf of the Panel.

Upon the endorsement of the Panel and with the agreement of the QAC Chairman, the Panel Officer submits a proposal paper to the Board for CPE&LL. Normally the paper covers the background of the proposal and the report of the validation meeting. Prior to the proposed programme is

submitted to the Board for CPE&LL, the Programme Team must prepare a Programme Definitive Document, which describes the programme as approved and becomes a reference text for staff and students.

The following, in addition to a Programme Definitive Document, will also be required for all award-bearing programmes except for Foundation and Intermediate Certificates.

- a. prepare a Student Handbook (refer to the School's standard Student Handbook and supplement programme specific information)
- b. establish an Academic Committee
- c. establish an Admissions Committee (Appendix A), if appropriate
- d. appoint External Examiners/ Academic Assessors, if applicable
- e. establish a Board of Examiners

Notwithstanding that the Board for CPE&LL has given the final academic approval for launching the programme, the student recruitment process can begin **only after** the detailed programme budget has been approved by the BVP. (Details on budget approval procedures are available from the HKU SPACE Finance Team.)

For programmes offered in partnership with a non-local institution, the submission of the programmes to the Non-local Courses Registry (NCR) of the HKSAR Government for approval of exemption is also required prior to student admission. Prior to this, marketing of new programmes must carry the “**Subject to Approval**” remark.

6. Main Issues for Consideration by Validation Panels

6.1 All Programmes

Panel members must consider whether

- a. the rationale for the programme and its aims and intended learning outcomes are appropriate for the needs of students and employers
- b. the academic standard proposed is appropriate for the level of award
- c. the structure and content of the curriculum are satisfactory
- d. the proposed academic and administrative staffing arrangements are satisfactory, bearing in mind HKU SPACE's extensive use of part-time teachers
- e. the teaching and learning approach is appropriate, with adequate learner support appropriate for the programme

- f. there is a coherent assessment strategy, with the weighting of different assessment tasks, and the methods and timing of assessment made explicit
- g. the types of assessment should align with the programme/modules' objectives and intended learning outcomes in light of the QF
- h. there are clear regulations for admission, progression and assessment
- i. the necessary library, IT and any specialist facilities are in place
- j. the management, monitoring and quality assurance arrangements are clearly stated

6.2 Distance Learning Delivery

Where distance learning mode is proposed for all or part of a programme, panel members must also take close account of the Programme Team's proposals for:

- a. the delivery model (ie balance of materials, 'intensive schools', tutorial support)
- b. learner support systems (whether personal or electronic)
- c. any structured learning materials and, where applicable, their adaptation/localisation in the case of a non-local programme

6.3 Collaborative Provision

The Panel must begin by confirming that approval for the collaboration has been agreed. It should then explore, where applicable, whether the Programme Team has given thorough consideration to

- a. any adaptation of the curriculum, if the curriculum was originally developed for a different country/ context
- b. any modification of the delivery approach if the programme was originally developed for a different mode
- c. the proposed medium of instruction and/ or assessment (bearing in mind that students, staff, and External Examiners/ Academic Assessors all need fluency for academic purposes in the language of teaching, learning, and assessment)
- d. the division of labour and responsibilities between the partners, including for admissions, teacher recruitment, learner support, assessment and record keeping, and for management and monitoring

- e. the formal liaison and communication channels between the partners
- f. any quality assurance requirements which may be required by the partner (and the relationship of these to HKU SPACE's own QA arrangements)

THE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG
SCHOOL OF PROFESSIONAL AND CONTINUING EDUCATION

Admissions Committee for
(HKU SPACE Programme Name)

Terms of Reference

1. To propose policies in relation to admissions issues, including minimum entry requirements and recognition of academic/professional programmes and qualifications, to the Academic Committee for approval.
2. To consider applicants with non-standard qualifications for entry to the programme.
3. To consider and grant exemptions according to the programme regulations.
4. To report to the Academic Committee on matters relating to programme admissions as and when necessary.

Membership

1. Programme Leader (Convenor)
2. Teacher representative(s)
3. Other member(s) from the Programme Team (if necessary)
4. College/ Centre Head (optional)
5. Course Director (if applicable)
6. Co-opted members (if necessary)

CHAPTER 5

Programme Monitoring

1. Introduction

Quality assurance procedures at HKU SPACE are designed to assure and enhance the quality of education experience of students through careful evaluation of all programme proposals, through the regular monitoring of programme and course delivery and of outcome standards, and through the periodic review of all provisions.

2. Overall Purpose

Once a programme is offered to students, the Programme Team is required to systematically monitor the quality of programme delivery and of the outcomes achieved by students. This entails a continuous process of reflection and review, taking account of feedback from students, teachers, External Examiners, Academic Assessors, and Academic Committees with a view to building on strengths, addressing weaknesses, updating academic content and upgrading support for learners. The monitoring also aims to keep a close eye on the health of the programme, so as to maintain high standards of delivery and of outcomes, and to deal with problems swiftly and effectively.

3. Academic Committee

For each award-bearing programme, an Academic Committee (AC) is set up for continuous monitoring of the academic quality of the programme, in particular, considering the programme monitoring activities and giving comments and advice on subject-related issues where appropriate. The Terms of Reference and composition of an AC are given in [Appendix A](#).

The AC and Board of Examiners (BoE) of award-bearing programmes which share the same subject group may be combined to enhance efficiency. It is a good practice for the AC of a programme or programmes in the same subject group to include short courses in its remit of programme monitoring.

The following six aspects of programme monitoring activities shall be the standing items in the agenda in an AC meeting held at the end of a year of study:

- a. Student Enrolment
- b. Teachers and Teaching Quality
- c. Programme Structure and Curriculum
- d. Programme Management
- e. Student Assessment and Performance
- f. Learning Centres and Support Services

In the same meeting, the AC will consider:

- g. Action Taken
- h. Action Planned
- i. Good Practices

4. Monitoring Activities

The Programme Team is responsible for monitoring the quality of programme management, programme delivery and the student achievements. Through various formal and informal channels, the Programme Team gathers students' and teachers' views, observes classroom teaching, and seeks external recognition of the academic standards achieved throughout the year of study, which are summarised and analysed for presentation to the AC. The major monitoring activities are shown below.

4.1 Student Learning Experience

Feedback from students is an essential element in monitoring the quality of a programme as experienced by the 'users' and students' views can be gathered in a variety of ways, viz:

(1) Quantitative Data

- (a) The standard student questionnaire form, "Learning Experience Survey" (LES), should be used as a common framework for all programmes and courses. The form may be enhanced to suit the needs of particular programmes where practicable and necessary.
- (b) The LES is designed for optical scanning. It offers a quick and systematic measure of students' views, and can draw attention to specific issues or problems. Information collected from the LES should be supplemented by other communication channels for meaningful results.
- (c) The LES should be normally used for end of module evaluation for all award-bearing programmes. The LES is also used for end of course evaluation for a sample of short courses.

- (d) For small classes with enrolment fewer than five, LES would not be administered; but LES questionnaires on modules with enrolment of five or above would still be processed, and the scores with low return rates should be interpreted judiciously.
- (e) The LES, or the relevant parts of it, may also be appropriate for use at other critical stages: e.g. for early evaluation of newly developed courses, or in the case of negative student feedback via other channels.
- (f) The quantitative data gathered through the LES are compiled as statistical reports. The reports and summaries are stored centrally in the LES-Record Management System for on-line access by designated staff. Overall summaries are reported to the Programme Teams, Subject Group Leaders, senior management, the QAC and to the Board for CPE&LL.

For programmes offered in collaboration with a partner institution, it is not appropriate to duplicate the student surveys if the partner institution has in place a similar arrangement. Nevertheless, the student survey by the School may be used, with modifications if necessary, to supplement those aspects not covered by the partner's survey.

(2) Qualitative Data

Qualitative feedback from students is less easy to document and analyse, but the data are vital to illuminate and amplify the quantitative data derived from the questionnaires. Qualitative data can be gathered from various channels which may include written comments given by students in the LES, student representatives on Academic Committees and Staff-Student Consultative Committee, on-line feedback via the HKU SPACE website, in-class discussion sessions and, telephone surveys.

The Programme Leader should review all data, whether quantitative or qualitative, and take relevant remedial actions. The Programme Leader should provide information from the student feedback to relevant teachers, and must ensure that any follow-up action is taken by the teachers as required.

After follow-up action is taken, the Programme Leader gives feedback to students about the action taken in relation to student comments. This completes the feedback and communication loop, and assures students that the School is committed to continuous quality improvement.

4.2 Teaching Quality

The Programme Leader is responsible for the preparation, briefing and induction of teachers and for staff development of teachers as appropriate. It

is essential to ensure that teachers are given all necessary information on a programme to enable appropriate preparation for teaching. Meetings of all teachers in a programme are organised by the Programme Leader prior to the commencement and during the delivery of a programme. Such meetings facilitate communication among teachers such as clarification of programme objectives, intended learning outcomes and avoiding overlapping of lecture content. Other less formal communication channels such as discussions during class visits or phone calls are also used.

Direct observation by the Programme Leader or another senior colleague is a requirement for all new teachers during their first six months of teaching, and for a sample of existing teaching staff where time and resources allow. In the case of negative comments from students about teaching or other issues about a programme, the Programme Leader will conduct class visits and/ or telephone surveys with students for gathering more relevant information to help determine follow-up action.

It is a good practice to invite teachers, especially new teachers to join the Programme Leader in class visits, where feasible. Such arrangements will facilitate peer sharing of teaching experience and is particularly helpful in cases where a module is taught by more than one teacher and in cases where there are several classes for a programme.

The Programme Team is expected to provide feedback on teaching observation to the teachers with a view to identifying possible actions for improvement or encouraging good teaching. Summary of reports on teaching observation and relevant follow-up actions are reported to the AC and recorded in the AC Minutes, as well as in the personnel record of the teachers concerned.

4.3 Programme Standards

External Examiners (EEs) and Academic Assessors (AAs) are required for all HKU SPACE award-bearing programmes at Qualifications Framework (QF) level 2 and above. They are established independent academics or professionals in the subject, who are invited to give academic advice on the programme or subject group, and to confirm that the standards achieved are comparable to those of similar programmes in other higher education institutions and are of the appropriate professional standards.

In addition to EEs and AAs, other programme monitoring mechanisms include ACs, BoEs and Staff-Student Consultative Committees (SSCCs).

4.4 Handling of Complaints and Compliments

The School values complaints as a constructive feedback source to help future improvement. To ensure that due attention is given and necessary remedial actions are promptly taken in the handling of complaints on both

academic and other issues, there are formalised handling procedures serving as internal guidelines for HKU SPACE colleagues. For the purpose of experience sharing among colleagues, a summary on the nature of written complaints as well as compliments is prepared on a monthly and an annual basis by the Quality Assurance (QA) Team.

5. Reporting on Programme Monitoring Activities

The following gives the reporting routes for award-bearing and non-award-bearing programmes and courses.

5.1 Award-Bearing Programmes

The Programme Leader is responsible for leading the programme monitoring process to review, reflect and discuss the monitoring activities at the AC meeting with reference to the standing items on the agenda as listed in Section 3.

The major issues will be highlighted and indicated in the side column of the AC Minutes. The College Affairs Secretary (CAS) shall prepare, for submission to the CAB, a covering list of programmes for which AC meetings have been held and their monitoring activities discussed and recorded in the AC Minutes.

The CAB receives the AC Minutes and decides on which major issues to be reported to the QAC. The major issues, good practices together with the comments of the CAB will be presented in an Overview Report for submission via the QA Team to the QAC, within 3 months of the end of a year of study.

5.2 Non-Award Bearing Short Courses

As generally ACs are not arranged for short courses, monitoring reports for these courses are presented to the CAB for peer comment and discussion. If there are major issues requiring the attention of the CAB and/or QAC, the major issues will be included in the Overview Report prepared by the CAB for submission to the QAC.

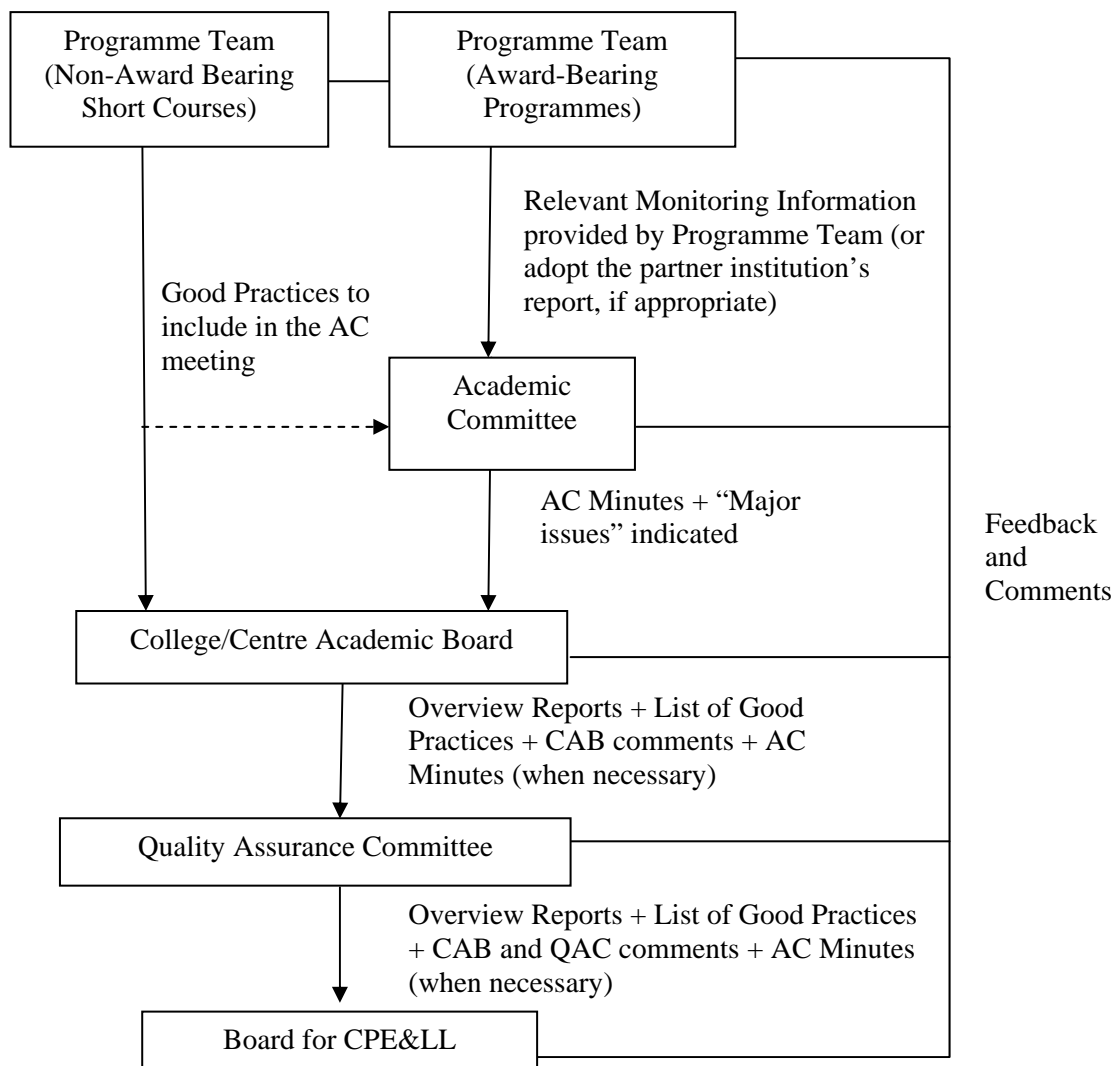
6. Reporting to the Quality Assurance Committee and the Board for Continuing and Professional Education and Lifelong Learning

The QA Team gathers all the Overview Reports from the CAS annually for submission to the QAC. The QAC delegates the direct scrutiny of monitoring programmes to the ACs and CAB, but it maintains its overview of the monitoring process by receiving all the Overview Reports. The QAC is tasked to make observations and advice on these monitoring records. The QAC's

comments are included in the further submission of the Overview Reports to the Board for CPE&LL in an annual cycle, drawing the Board’s attention to any significant issues or concerns.

The reporting path is shown in the following diagram.

Reporting Path for Monitoring of Programmes



THE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG

SCHOOL OF PROFESSIONAL AND CONTINUING EDUCATION

**Academic Committee for
*(HKU SPACE Programme Name)***

Terms of Reference

1. To ensure the maintenance of academic standards of the programme generally, and specifically, to review and give advice on the teaching and learning processes regularly with particular reference to the following aspects:
 - the admission criteria, procedures and the appointment of the Admission Committee or Admission Tutor(s);
 - the programme structure, content, delivery and assessment;
 - the criteria for appointment of teacher(s) on the programme;
 - the criteria for appointment of external examiner(s) and/or academic assessor(s);
 - the student and teacher feedback on the programme quality and the teaching and learning processes;
 - any other matters of academic concern
2. To consider where appropriate new programme proposals which are developed from the programme monitored by this Committee, with changes in only a minor portion (no more than 25%) of the curriculum. This will include new programmes leading to a new award level and/or nomenclature.
3. To consider and give approval or otherwise for programme modification on subject-related issues.
4. To conduct annual review of QF levels and credits.
5. To discuss the monitoring activities on the programme for the past year of study for reporting via the CAB to the QAC. The following categories shall be standing items in the agenda:
 - a. Student Enrolment
 - b. Teachers and Teaching Quality
 - c. Programme Structure and Curriculum
 - d. Programme Management

- e. Student Assessment and Performance
 - f. Learning Centres and Support Services
 - g. Action Taken
 - h. Action Planned
 - i. Good Practices
6. To advise the CAB, the QAC and the Board for CPE&LL generally on any matters concerning the quality of the programme where appropriate.
 7. To report to the appropriate parent bodies as required.

Membership

1. College Head or his representative* (Chairman)
2. HKU SPACE Programme Leader(s)
3. Relevant Subject Group leader(s)
4. Course Directors (if applicable)
5. 1-3 Teacher Representatives
6. At least 1 representative from outside the School who is/are professionally qualified in the field
7. External Examiner/ Academic Assessor
8. 1-2 student representatives as determined by the Committee
9. Co-opted members as determined by the Committee

* The Academic Committee Chairman should not be a staff closely related to the programme concerned in any way to ensure impartiality.

For programmes jointly offered by two or more academic units of the School, the membership is as follows:-

- 1.1 College/Centre Head or his representative (Chairman) (this is the College which hosts the programme)
- 1.2 College/Centre Head or his representative (Deputy Chairman) (this is the collaboration college(s))

Other members will be the same as above.

Periods of Office:

For categories 1-3 (and Deputy Chairman of joint programme(s)) with the office concerned

For categories 4-9 annual unless specified otherwise in the letter of appointment

Frequency of Meetings: as necessary but at least once per year.

CHAPTER 6

Programme Modification

1. Introduction

Upon successful validation and approval, a new programme is launched. It is normally the case that a new programme is approved subject to a 6-year cycle of programme review. During this period, annual reporting is made to the Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) on the monitoring of the programme during the year. While a full-scale programme review will normally be carried out a year before the end of the 6-year cycle, it may happen that certain parts of the programme require change or updating without delay.

2. Types of Programme Modifications

In all cases of programme modification, the changes must not affect the academic quality of a programme, as commensurate with the award level of the programme.

Modifications are categorised into major and minor changes with the following samples of programme modifications.

Major Changes*

- (a) Programme or award title;
- (b) QF level of programme;
- (c) Programme objectives;
- (d) Programme intended learning outcomes;
- (e) Programme streams;
- (f) Mode of study;
- (g) Duration;
- (h) Number of credits of programme;
- (i) Syllabus (10% - 25% of total number of programme credits or of the programme contents);
- (j) Minimum entry requirements.

* If only involve editing of e.g. programme and award titles, it is not considered as a major change.

Minor Changes

- (a) Module titles;
- (b) Syllabus (less than 10% of the total number of programme credits or of the programme contents);
- (c) Assessment methods and weightings;
- (d) QF level and/ or credits of modules;
- (e) Objectives and intended learning outcomes of modules.

If modifications to syllabus involve more than 25% of the total number of credits or of the entire programme contents, the programme will be considered as a “new” programme and will undergo a validation process. The purpose is to ensure that if the modification affects the academic value and integrity of the programme, the programme as a whole would be scrutinised. In cases of doubt, the Programme Team shall consult the QAC Chairman.

Changes in the programme budget are separately proposed via the HKU SPACE budget approval procedures, details of which are available from the HKU SPACE Finance Team.

3. The Modification Process

3.1 Timing

To ensure that modifications to a programme are approved in time for implementation, it is advisable to make proposals for programme modification well in advance. The timing for making proposals for modifications should most importantly take into consideration the time needed for programme publicity, notification to teachers, students and other relevant parties, and whether necessary actions can be taken to implement the changes. Modifications should normally be approved at least three months before implementation. There is however flexibility in the timing for some cases, such as sudden changes in government policies.

3.2 Proposal Document

The Programme Team prepares a proposal document for consideration of the Academic Committee (AC). The document shall include information on those aspects of the programme affected by the modification or such information useful in understanding the reasons for the modification. The proposal document normally contains the following information:

- (a) Item(s) requiring modification
- (b) Reason(s) for modification/benefits resulting from modification
- (c) Consultation with academic staff, students, and/or external examiners/advisors, professional bodies, as appropriate

- (d) Implications on current students and/or graduates, if applicable
- (e) Timing for modification and implementation
- (f) Qualifications Framework Level and Credit Assignment Form (QF1 Form)
- (g) Implications on resources, if any (separate budget change requests to be made according to the budget approval process)

Individual members of the AC have the right to ask for further information before considering the modification.

3.3 Approving Criteria

The criteria used by the AC for considering modification proposals include:

- (a) Academic validity of programme after modification
- (b) Feasibility of timing of implementation
- (c) Effects on the current students and/or graduates, if applicable
- (d) Effects on cognate programmes offered in HKU SPACE
- (e) Alignment of QF Level and Intended Learning Outcomes
- (f) Effects on the future development of the programme

The guiding principle is that the current students shall not be disadvantaged as a result of programme modification.

3.4 Approving Parties

For programme requiring modifications before the launching, the AC shall consider and approve such changes.

Major changes described in Section 2 of this Chapter shall be first discussed at AC meetings. The AC comments on and recommends the proposed modifications on subject-wise issues and gives approval or otherwise for the modification, which shall then be submitted to the College Academic Board (CAB) for information and consideration on policy and resources. For changes in award title, the QF level of a programme, or introducing a new stream or a new award, the Programme Team shall submit a paper on the proposed modifications to the SAM for approval, and then to the Board for CPE&LL for final academic approval.

When introducing a new programme stream with new programme and award titles, the Programme Team shall also prepare the QF1 Form in addition to the proposal paper, which are considered and endorsed by the School Vetting Committee prior to seeking final academic approval from the Board for CPE&LL.

For minor changes, the AC Chairman may decide to take Chairman's action or to seek approval by the circulation, which shall be reported to the subsequent AC meeting. All AC decisions shall be reported to the CAB for information.

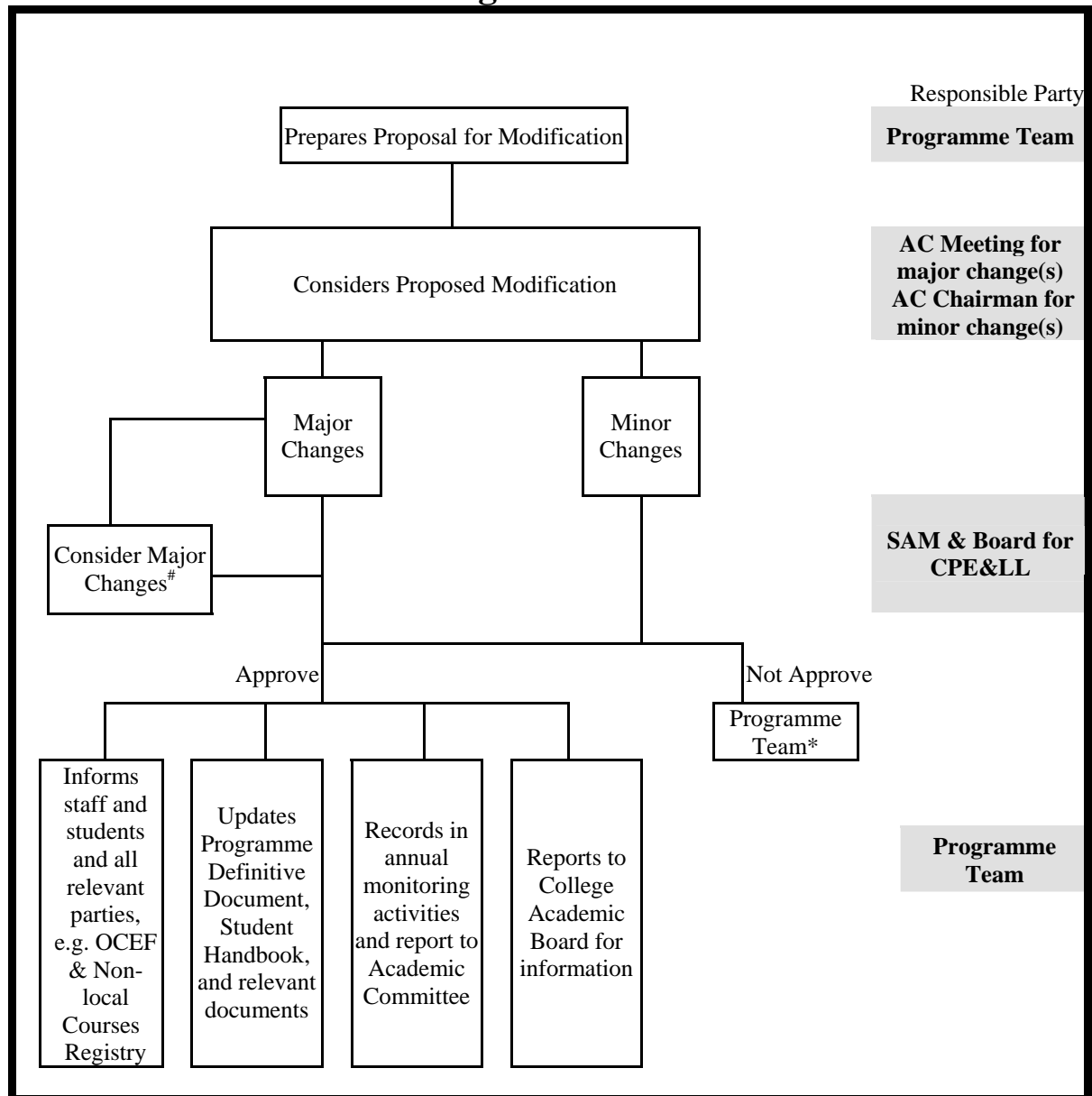
3.5 Follow-Up Action

Upon approval of the Board for CPE&LL, the AC meeting or the AC Chairman as appropriate, the Programme Team shall:

- (a) inform all staff and students and/or graduates concerned of the approved changes in advance;
- (b) make appropriate amendments to the Programme Definitive Document, the Student Handbook and any other relevant information published;
- (c) notify any relevant professional bodies, government departments, public bodies and any other organisations about the modification;
- (d) record the approved modification and the related follow-up action in the annual monitoring activities for the year concerned.

Appendix A provides the flowchart of procedures involved.

Flowchart of Programme Modification



Major Changes: #Programme or award title; #Programme streams; #QF level of programme; Programme objectives; Programme Intended Learning Outcomes; Mode of study; Duration; Number of credits of programme; Syllabus (10% - 25% of total number of programme credits); Minimum entry requirements. Major changes are received by CAB for information and consideration on policy and resources only.

Minor Changes: Module titles; Syllabus (less than 10% of the total number of credits or of the programme contents); Assessment methods and weightings; QF level and/ or credits of modules; Objectives and intended learning outcomes of modules.

* The Programme Team may consider the reasons for failure and re-submit the modification proposal after amendment.

CHAPTER 7

Programme Review

1. Introduction

Programme review plays an important role in sustaining the quality of a programme after the initial approval stage. It provides a mechanism for quality assurance that is used in conjunction with programme monitoring measures.

2. Overall Purpose

Programme review provides an opportunity for consolidation of issues and changes about a programme. An overview is made possible through programme review to assess the effectiveness of programme monitoring, as well as to conduct a full-scale evaluation of a programme for further development and quality improvement.

A 6-year cycle review mechanism is implemented to complement the annual monitoring and review functions of the Academic Committee (AC) of the programme. The outcome of the 6-year review will be endorsed by the Board for Continuing and Professional Education and Lifelong Learning (Board for CPE&LL), and will include the decision for the programme to continue or discontinue.

3. Categorisation of Programmes for Programme Review

For non-award bearing programmes, the monitoring and reporting process will suffice for maintaining the quality of the programmes.

As for award-bearing programmes, they can be divided into two categories. The first category refers to those programmes offered in partnership with other tertiary education institutions or other academic units in The University of Hong Kong (HKU), and those accredited for professional recognition. The second category refers to those programmes offered by HKU SPACE and leading to awards within the HKU system.

If a programme is offered through a collaboration agreement with another institution, and the partner has in place a comprehensive programme review system, HKU SPACE may consider synchronising the programme review

processes of the two institutions or adopting the partner's programme review. The School should ensure that the purpose, scope, rigor and transparency of the programme reviews are comparable to that of the School's review. There should be adequate focus on how the programme meets local needs. The School should fully involve in the programme reviews.

If a programme has been subject to professional accreditation and the accredited status is subject to periodical review by the professional body concerned, the review may also be synchronised with the HKU SPACE programme review or be considered as fulfilling the HKU SPACE programme review requirement. For those award-bearing programmes for which the partner institution does not have a programme review system or professional accreditation process, or for programmes with awards conferred within the HKU system, the HKU SPACE programme review will be required.

4. Timing

A 6-year review cycle applies to all award-bearing programmes, except for doctoral degrees, unless an approval period has been stipulated for a programme during validation. The first review for doctoral degree programmes should normally be completed before the 8th year ends, and thereafter at a 6-year interval for subsequent reviews. The process for programme review should begin one year before the end of the 6-year cycle or the end date of the approval period, whichever is earlier. The submission of the review report to the Board for CPE&LL should be made at least 6 months before the end of the review cycle. This is to ensure that there is sufficient time for any programme modification to take place before the student intake subsequent to the programme review. The timing of the programme review may be advanced if necessary.

If the programme cannot complete the programme review process before the approval period expires, the Programme Team may apply for rescheduling of the review for one year. Such an application with written justifications is made by the Programme Team to the School Academic and Management Board (SAM). With the SAM approval, the programme can continue with new student intake for one year, while preparing for programme review. The review should normally be completed and submitted to the Board for CPE&LL at least 6 months before the end of the rescheduled period. A programme which cannot complete the review by the end of the rescheduled period will not be permitted to have new student intakes.

In certain circumstances, a new programme proposal is generated out of an existing programme and the process for new programme validation will be followed. In all cases, the academic quality of the programme must not be adversely affected.

5. Programme Review Procedures

The procedures for programme review are similar to those for programme validation ([Appendix A](#)). The major difference is that during programme review the experience in offering the programme and the comments received from various stakeholders play an important role. They should be thoroughly analysed by the Programme Team for further implementation and development of the programme. One review panel may be adopted for programmes of the same or cognate subject group if the review of the programmes falls in the same timing.

If the Programme Team proposes changes of more than 25% in syllabus or re-titling or other changes to be made at the time of programme review, AC members shall be invited to give comments prior to the programme review meeting. All the comments received shall be conveyed to the Programme Review Panel (PRP) for discussion, and the results are reported back to the AC for further action.

The details are given as follows.

5.1 Programme Review Document

A Programme Review Document is a summary paper containing:

- (a) an overall evaluation and highlights of the academic and professional value and merits containing:
 - (1) A summary of the programme monitoring activities for the period of review;
 - (2) An analytical report on student application, admission, student assessment, progression and graduation, as well as staffing and teaching quality.
- (b) an appraisal of all the changes since the last validation/ 6-year review containing:
 - (1) Comments received from students, teachers and/or employers, and a report on related follow-up action;
 - (2) A summary of the reports from External Examiners/Academic Assessors and a report on related follow-up action;
 - (3) A summary of advice and comments from the Academic Committee and teaching staff, and a report on related follow-up action;
 - (4) Significant developments in the subject group in the profession or industry that may affect the programme;

- (5) A critical appraisal of the programme, its syllabuses, significant issues and developments.
- (c) a development plan for further quality enhancement including proposals for modifications.

The Programme Team shall also attach the existing Programme Definitive Document, brief information on the last validation/ review of the programme, Qualification Framework Level and Credit Assignment Form (QF1 Form) as well as any other relevant information for the PRP's reference.

Supporting background information, including Academic Committee Minutes on programme monitoring activities, External Examiner/ Academic Assessor Reports, Learning Experience Surveys and Teaching Experience Surveys, Validation Reports and Staff-Student Consultative Committee Minutes, should also be made available for the PRP and the QA Team, as and when necessary.

Where appropriate, the Programme Review Document may be modified to serve as the record of programme monitoring activities for the year in which the review takes place.

5.2 Programme Review Panel

A PRP is set up specifically for conducting the review process. The PRP reviews the Programme Review Document in detail, with particular attention to the development plan and evaluates the feasibility and the merit of continuing the programme.

The composition of the Panel will normally be:

- Chairman (AC Chairman)
- Two external specialists (academics or professionals in the subject group of the programme)
- External Examiner/Academic Assessor
- Panel Officer (AC Secretary)

To ensure an impartial review, members of the Panel are those not involved in the design and delivery of the programme. The external membership shall be submitted via the Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) Chairman to the Chairman of the Board for CPE&LL for endorsement.

5.3 Programme Review Meeting

In the Programme Review Meeting, the PRP will review and discuss the Programme Review Document with the Programme Team. Teachers,

students and, if possible, graduates will be invited to meet with the Panel to provide feedback.

5.4 Programme Review Report

At the end of the meeting, the PRP will normally recommend one of the following:

- (a) the continuous monitoring and annual reporting has been effective and the programme may continue, with implementation of the development plan; or
- (b) further improvement is necessary to ascertain the quality of the programme before the programme may be permitted to continue; or
- (c) the programme should be discontinued.

If the PRP recommends (a), the PRP is asked to state:

- (i) whether the development plan is supported for implementation;
- (ii) any other recommendations for improvement; and
- (iii) any approval period of the programme if deemed necessary by the PRP.

If the PRP recommends (b), the PRP is asked to state:

- (i) if there are conditions for the approval;
- (ii) any recommendations for improvement; and
- (iii) any approval period of the programme if deemed necessary by the PRP.

The 6-year cycle of reviews applies if an approval period is not specified.

6. Post-Programme Review Meeting Action

The Panel Officer prepares a Programme Review Report recording the discussions and the recommendations of the Panel. The Report plus the Programme Team's response to the conditions and/ or recommendations, if any are sent to the PRP for confirmation and consideration respectively prior to the submission to the Board for CPE&LL for final approval.

If the PRP recommends discontinuation of the programme, the Programme Team may modify and re-submit the Programme Review Document for re-consideration by the Panel. A second Programme Review Meeting will be conducted.

For programmes at QF level 2 to 3, the recommendation of the PRP is submitted to the Board for CPE&LL for approval. The Panel Officer will prepare a short summary of the recommendation of the PRP. The Board may specify an approval period for a programme if it deems necessary. Otherwise the next review will be according to the normal 6-year cycle.

For programmes at QF level 4 and above, the recommendation of the PRP is submitted to the Board for CPE&LL for approval. The Panel Officer will prepare a recommendation paper. The Board for CPE&LL may specify an approval period for the programme if it deems necessary. Otherwise the next review will follow the normal 6-year cycle.

In all cases and prior to submission of the recommendation paper to the Board for CPE&LL, the Panel Officer shall submit the PRP Report together with the Programme Team's response to the CAB for information and consideration on policy and resources issues. The same PRP Report shall be submitted via the QA Team to the QAC to confirm completion of the review process for programmes concerned.

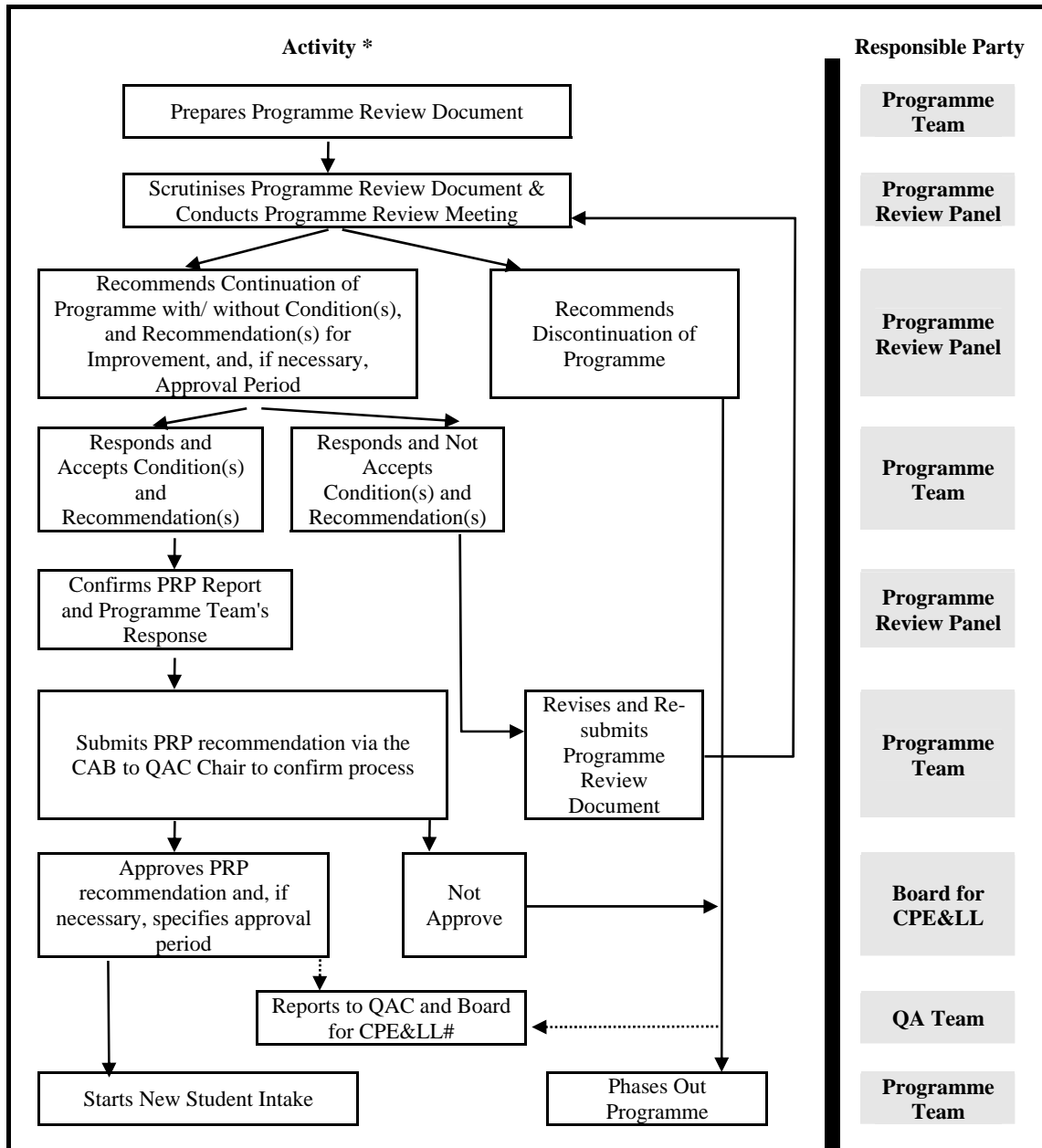
Upon approval by the Board for CPE&LL to continue the programme, the Programme Team shall prepare for student admission. Any changes to the programme as an outcome of the programme review should be reflected in a new Programme Definitive Document and a new Student Handbook.

If the decision of the Board is to discontinue the programme, the Programme Team may propose a new programme to replace the one to be discontinued. This new programme will be subject to the programme validation and approval process.

The existing cohort of students who follow the pre-programme review version of the programme shall normally not be affected unless as recommended by the PRP and approved by the Board for CPE&LL, and as recorded in the Programme Review Report.

All programme review activities, including adoption of the review process by partner institutions, or professional bodies, shall be listed for reporting on a half-yearly basis to the QAC and the Board for CPE&LL for information and for monitoring the Quality Assurance process.

Programme Review Process



.....> reporting for information

* For programmes for which an approval period has not been stipulated, a 6-year cycle of reviews applies. For programmes with an approval period, the process for programme review should begin one year before the end date of the approval period.

Programme review activities shall be listed for reporting on a half-yearly basis via the CAB to the QAC for information and monitoring of the QA process. This reporting may be done prior to or after the new student intake, depending on the timing of the review and the QAC meeting schedule. The same will be reported to the Board for CPE&LL.

CHAPTER 8

Quality Process Review

1. Introduction

The **Quality Process Review** is established to foster the implementation of quality assurance policy and process in all areas of work of the School and to ensure that such activities are congruent with the School's mission and direction of development.

2. Purpose

The Review is conducted under the auspices of the Quality Assurance Committee (QAC). It is meant to be a collegial process conducted as a shared responsibility of all colleagues in the School beneficial to the growth of quality culture. The purpose of the Review is to confirm the implementation and monitoring of the quality assurance process in programmes and teaching and learning support services offered by HKU SPACE. The Review is conducted for ascertaining that all quality assurance processes have been appropriately carried out.

The Review is not meant to be an assessment nor a quality audit, or to repeat the processes of programme approval and review which should have been conducted throughout the implementation of programmes.

The Review also provides an opportunity for

- evaluation of prevailing quality assurance procedures,
- consideration of solutions to difficulties identified by the evaluation,
- upholding and sharing of good and effective practice,
- clarification of ambiguities,
- identification of areas for further improvement and development.

The Quality Process Review may share similar aims and purposes as external audits and reviews that the School will encounter. The School may accept such external exercises as having met its Quality Process Review requirements.

External audits and reviews include the Institutional Reviews conducted by the Joint Quality Review Committee (JQRC) for programmes at sub-degree level, the Audits conducted by the Quality Assurance Council of the University Grants

Committee (UGC) for programmes at degree level and above, and audits by the Australian University Quality Agency (AUQA) on programmes delivered by Australian universities in Hong Kong through partnership with the School.

The QAC of the School will be informed of such external audits and reviews and will decide whether the requirements of the Quality Process Review has been adequately met, and may decide to supplement aspects not covered by the external audits and reviews by internal review processes if necessary.

3. Procedures for Quality Process Review

The Review will normally be conducted **in six-year cycles**.

The Quality Process Review is on the implementation of quality assurance process across programmes that may be clustered under cognate subject groups as decided by the QAC.

The procedures for the Quality Process Review Visit are given in Appendix A.

The Review starts with a self-evaluation process by the subject groups. The self-evaluation will focus on whether and how the subject groups have implemented the various quality assurance mechanisms in programme delivery.

The subject groups are required to summarise the self-evaluation in a Self-Evaluation Document (SED), with reference to the issues in Appendix B. The SED is submitted to the Quality Process Review Panel, together with relevant background information documents including a list of programmes, enrolment statistics, Academic Committees Minutes recording the programme monitoring activities, chronological record of relevant committee meetings. The documents let the Panel have an overview and understanding of the activities in the subject groups. The Panel makes a visit to meet the subject groups participating in the Review. The Panel may consider meeting the Directorate and students, a spectrum of staff in the subject groups, including senior staff, supporting staff and part-time teachers. The discussion will focus mainly on the application of quality assurance processes for the programmes concerned and the embedment of quality culture in the activities of the subject groups. The issues given in Appendix B and contained in the SED may be considered by the Review Panel during the Review.

By the visit, the Panel aims to find out:

- how the quality assurance processes are implemented,
- whether there are any issues which arise from the implementation,
- what further action may be taken by the subject groups to ensure and facilitate the implementation,
- whether the current quality assurance processes should continue to be applied to the subject groups.

After the visit, the Panel Officer prepares a Review Report containing findings and recommendations. The participating subject groups are invited to consider follow-up action to be taken according to each of the recommendations, and to submit a response in writing to the Panel. If the Panel finds the response acceptable, it then submits the Review Report and the response from the subject groups to the QAC for consideration. Subject to QAC's endorsement, the subject groups proceed to take follow-up action accordingly. The QAC also distributes the Review Report and the response to other subject groups for information and experience sharing, and to the Board for CPE&LL for information.

4. Quality Process Review Panel

The Quality Process Review Panel is established by the QAC. The Panel normally consists of

- One QAC member (Chairman of the Panel)
- One HKU faculty academic
- One external person, academic or professional, from outside the School
- One HKU SPACE academic from outside the subject groups concerned in the Review
- Quality Assurance Director (Panel Officer)

The Panel will be charged with the responsibilities of

- reading the SED and related documents,
- meeting with the staff of the subject groups concerned, and the Directorate and students where relevant,
- confirmation of the quality assurance activities and their implementation,
- endorsement of the Review Report,
- consideration of the response from subject groups.

5. Quality Process Review Report

A Quality Process Review Report compiled by the Panel Officer is a summary of

- the review proceedings,
- the discussions between various parties in the review,
- the observations and comments made by the Quality Process Review Panel,
- the recommendations made by the Panel.

6. Post-Review Activities

With the endorsement of the QAC on the Quality Process Review Report and the response of the subject groups, the subject groups proceed to take appropriate follow-up action. These activities will be reported at the Academic Committee meeting.

7. External Reviews and Audits

The School from time to time undergoes external reviews and audits of either the whole or parts of the quality assurance activities of the School.

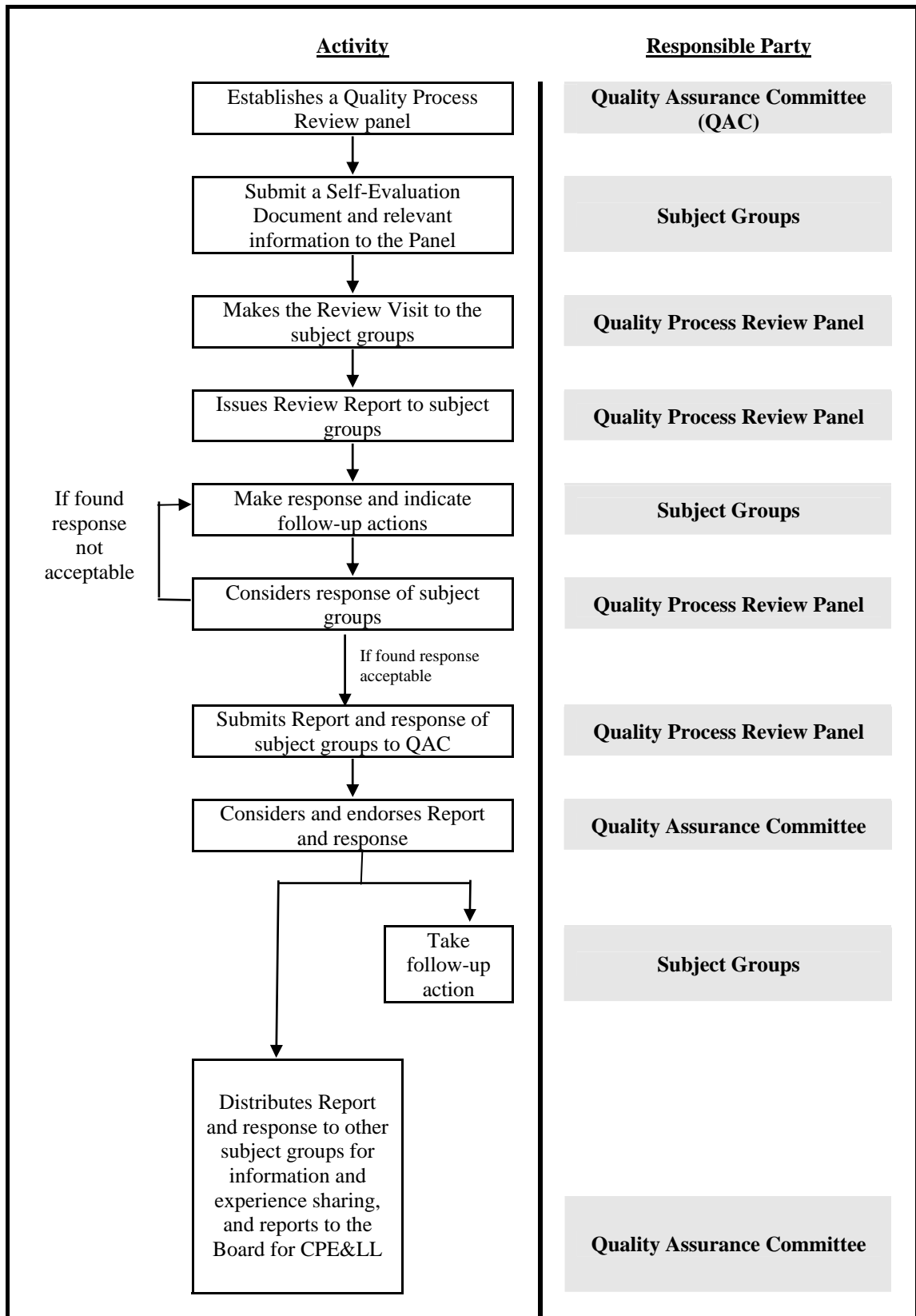
One of the major reviews is the Teaching and Learning Quality Process Reviews conducted by the UGC in June 2002, which covered the self-financed continuing education sector of the UGC-funded tertiary education institutions.

The JQRC that was set up by the Heads of Universities Committee reviewed the programmes offered by the School at the QF level 4 and below in December 2007.

There are other similar review activities such as the Review of the School conducted by the HKU Council, the Internal Audits of the HKU and audits conducted by the Quality Assurance Council of the UGC.

The above activities take on a similar purpose as the Quality Process Review. Apart from reviews at the School level, there are also some external reviews and audits conducted at the subject group level or for clusters of programmes carried out by the quality agency of the home country, such as the AUQA, as well as the quality reviews of programmes carried out by the partner institutions.

Quality Process Review Procedures



Issues for Consideration in the Quality Process Review

When preparing the Self-Evaluation Document, the subject groups address questions regarding implementation of the following quality assurance processes:

- a. Programme Validation and Approval
 - b. Programme Monitoring
 - c. Programme Modification
 - d. Programme Review
 - e. Teaching and Learning Supports Service Quality
1. Whether the relevant quality assurance procedures and measures have been conducted?
 2. What difficulties have been identified in the process, and whether and how they have been overcome?
 3. What further actions should be taken to ensure the continuity of implementing the procedures?

The same questions may be raised by the Quality Process Review Panel during the Panel's meeting with the subject groups.

CHAPTER 9

Teaching and Learning Support

1. Introduction

Quality teaching and learning support complements the academic quality of the programmes and is conducive to effective programme delivery. Additional support from partner institutes may also be provided for individual programme offered in collaboration with partner institutes.

2. Teaching and Learning Support Facilities and Services

The key teaching and learning support facilities and services are listed as follows:

2.1 Learning Centres and Facilities

Learning centres are chosen with regard to ease of access and suitable environment for supporting teaching and learning. All learning centres are equipped with appropriate furniture and audio-visual equipment to support teaching and learning activities. The School is continuously developing new learning centres and upgrading the facilities of existing centres to ensure that the most up-to-date technologies are suitably adopted and the necessary technical resources and assistance are extended to staff and students. Purpose-built facilities including computer laboratories, art and design studios, Chinese medicine clinics and pharmacies, a dietetic clinic, and music rooms are provided to support programmes of specific subject areas. Arrangements are also made with HKU and other organisations for use of various specialised teaching and learning facilities and equipment. Learning centres also provide support facilities to students such as student lounges, study rooms, cyberstations, and photocopiers. Staff lounges and tutor rooms with computers and equipment are provided for teachers.

2.2 SPACE Online Universal Learning (SOUL) Platform

SOUL is a total e-learning platform for students, teachers and programme management staff in the School. It provides online support, a flexible learning environment and enhanced interaction between teachers and

students. It is also a web-based learning platform through which online programmes are offered. Efficient dissemination of information, such as programme schedules, lecture handouts and submission of coursework assignments, is facilitated by the SOUL platform. Students in collaborative programmes may be allowed to access to partner's e-learning platforms.

2.3 Library Access

For award-bearing and professional programme, teaching staff and students are normally provided with access to HKU Libraries and enjoy various benefits like on-site use of library resources and borrowing privileges. Teachers and students with borrowing privileges may also access electronic forms of information via the SOUL platform as a portal to web-based electronic library resources. Students of collaborative programmes may also access to e-libraries of the partner institutions.

3. Teaching Quality and Support

Various means and mechanisms are devised for the purpose of supporting and enhancing teaching quality. They are designed for easy understanding and implementation and are subject to modifications to suit the needs of different programmes. The teaching quality assurance mechanisms must not be excessive and must be tactfully applied.

The School has set up a Teacher Support Unit responsible for establishing an enhanced part-time teacher database, monitoring, archiving and management information as well as for consolidating the services and support provided for part-time teachers.

3.1 Teacher Recruitment

Assurance of teaching quality starts from recruitment of teaching staff who have the appropriate academic and/ or professional qualifications and experience, and who conform with the required standard in teaching and related responsibilities. In addition to full-time HKU SPACE teaching staff, temporary full-time and part-time teachers are appointed. These teachers may include full-time lecturing staff of local and overseas tertiary education institutions (such as colleagues in HKU or academics of partner institutions) and subject experts in the industry or the professions.

The recruitment procedures cover the application, interview and appointment processes for all teachers. Appointment of part-time teachers may also be done by nominations made to the College Head to complete the appointment and personnel record process.

Part-time teachers may be appointed as Adjunct Lecturers based on a suitable period of service and good teaching records.

3.2 Teacher Induction

The Programme Leader is responsible for the pre-programme induction of all teaching staff. The induction is to ensure that the teaching team is fully informed about the programme, so that the programme will be conducted in line with the validated proposal. The induction covers programme information and the teaching responsibilities, such as programme objectives, programme structure, curriculum, student assessment policies, programme timetable, quality assurance mechanisms, and teaching support facilities.

3.3 Guidebook for Part-time Teachers

The Guidebook for Part-time Teachers contains information on the School as a whole, including the School's mission, quality assurance policies, personnel and financial matters, communication channels, SOUL platform, information on teaching and learning facilities available, and some helpful tips for new teachers.

3.4 Handbook on Effective Teaching

Teachers are provided with the Handbook on Effective Teaching, which outlines the major characteristics of adult learners, the way of handling difficult participants, and the "Do's" and "Don't's" in teaching adults. The Handbook suggests teaching techniques and the effective use of teaching equipment. It also introduces the concept of the Intended Learning Outcomes Approach.

3.5 Observation of Teaching

The Programme Leader is responsible for carrying out observation of teaching to ensure teaching quality. Feedback on the observation is provided to the teachers with a view to identifying possible actions for improvement or encouraging good teaching.

3.6 Reflection of Teaching Quality

Comments on teaching quality can be gathered from students by various useful sources such as the student representation on various committees, the Learning Experience Survey (LES), and informal discussions. Other sources to reflect teaching quality include the reports of External Examiners/Academic Assessors and the feedback given by the teaching staff to students on coursework.

It is important that the findings of the LES are channelled to the teachers. The Programme Team takes the responsibility for discussing the findings with individual teaching staff concerned. Commendations serve to encourage further enhancement while reviews and reflections are needed in cases where student feedback reflected below standard teaching. The reports and

observations made by the Programme Team are summarised and presented to the AC as a record of teaching quality monitoring. The findings are also put in the personnel records of individual teachers.

3.7 Teaching Experience and Self-Reflection

Teachers are encouraged to conduct a self-reflection of teaching quality at the end of each teaching year. The self-reflection should identify strengths and weaknesses in the teaching process in the past year, as well as plans for improvement. The teacher may discuss the self-reflection conclusions with the Programme Leader to reaffirm good teaching and to consider development needs.

At the same time, the teacher is asked to complete the Teaching Experience Survey together with the Part-time Teacher Work Report at the end of a teaching period. The Programme Leader considers the teacher's feedback, as complementary to the feedback from students, for purpose of quality improvement. Comments made by teachers regarding different issues such as Learning Centres, SOUL Platform, and staff development activities should be conveyed by the Programme Leader to the relevant units in the School for information and follow-up action.

3.8 Teacher Development

There are different types of staff development activities for different groups of staff organised by the TSU and Human Resource Team. Apart from the teacher inductions provided by the respective Programme Leader, the Human Resources Team also arranges inductions so that new teachers are given appropriate support and guidance. Since some HKU SPACE programmes are offered more than once a year, it may be necessary to schedule staff development activities at various intervals in a year.

The Programme Team and the relevant teaching staff shall identify areas of strength and/ or development needs. The Training and Staff Development Sub-Committee, in collaboration with the Programme Teams, regularly and systematically organises a range of workshops and seminars for professional development.

3.9 Teacher Portal

The Teacher Portal was set up to facilitate the building of online communication between the School and teachers, and among the teachers. The Portal also provides useful resources and references and to facilitate teaching preparation. Relevant Guidebook, Handbooks, and useful templates and forms are also available from the Portal for teachers' reference.

4. Learning Support

The key learning support provided by the School to facilitate student learning is listed as follows:

4.1 Learner Portal

To enrich e-services for academic and administrative support, the HKU SPACE Learner Portal is developed to:

- Provide a user-friendly "one-stop" information portal for HKU SPACE active students as a tool for and a window to learning
- Provide a gateway for learners to access on-line resources, and other e-Services provided or referred by the School

The Learner Portal is a website on the Internet that provides personalised access to different information and e-services pertaining to a particular interest.

4.2 Non-Classroom Activities

Formal non-classroom activities may be structured in a programme. The type of activities may vary according to individual programmes depending on the subject area, the academic level and the professional requirements. These activities mostly aim to supplement lectures and tutorials, and include laboratory sessions, clinical observations, traineeships, work placements, and field visits. Some samples of more programme-specific activities include clinical practicum, fashion show, calligraphy exhibition, and music performance.

4.3 Information Seminars/ Induction Sessions

For award-bearing and professional programmes, information seminars and induction meetings are normally conducted at the commencement of the programmes to provide students with necessary information. Guidance is also given to students in regard to study skills, academic writing skills and examination conduct. For programmes that are offered in collaboration with external partners, induction meetings are normally conducted with the partner institution.

4.4 Student Handbooks

Student handbooks are provided for students on individual programmes. The handbooks give general information on student discipline, examination conduct, channels of communication with the School, as well as details about specific programmes such as programme structure, aims, syllabus, class timetable, assessment regulations, plagiarism and reference book lists.

5. Communication and Feedback

HKU SPACE places great importance on effective communication with students and on gauging student feedback by various channels for formal and informal communication. The purpose is to ensure that students in HKU SPACE programmes, the overwhelming majority of whom are studying in the part-time mode, will be able to get adequate teaching and learning support.

At the start of their studies, students of individual programmes are notified of the contacts of relevant Programme Leaders, teaching staff and programme support staff. By assessing the School website, General Enquiry, the SOUL platform, Teacher Portal and Learner Portal, efficient and effective communication is facilitated.

Communication is also facilitated by the LES which is normally conducted near the end of each module. Aside from module and teaching effectiveness, student feedback is sought on the quality standard of support services.

In addition, students are represented in AC and Staff-Student Consultative Committee for individual programmes. The committees concern themselves with the quality of both the programmes' academic standard and the support services in teaching and learning.

In each classroom at the HKU SPACE Learning Centres, a Facilities and Services Feedback Form is provided for users to give feedback on the facilities in the classroom. A service telephone hotline number is also posted in case urgent assistance is required in the classroom.

In addition, students may convey comments, complaints and compliments by writing to the relevant Programme Leader, College Affairs Secretary or the Quality Assurance Director. Where appropriate, the complaints are presented to the College and/or School Complaint Committees for consideration. Records of complaints and compliments are summarised for colleagues' sharing at monthly intervals. Issues that lead to policy review are referred to the Quality Assurance Committee.

There is an arrangement of adequate and convenient contacts between Programme Leader and teaching staff. Communication channels should be made known to all teaching staff at the commencement of the programme by means of the appointment letters, teacher inductions, and other circulars. Communication channels include scheduled meetings of the AC, where teacher representatives serve as members of the AC, informal meetings and discussions, class visits, e-mail messages and the Online Feedback Form for Teachers in Teacher Portal. Besides, part-time teachers can also convey their feedback to the School via webmail or the Teaching Experience Survey.

ANNEX

Glossary of Terms

The Glossary provides a brief definition of the key terms used in quality assurance processes in HKU SPACE. Detailed explanations on the policies and procedures involved are given in the respective chapters in the Quality Assurance Manual.

Academic Approval

A process of quality assurance to scrutinise and evaluate new and existing programmes to ensure that their academic standards and quality are appropriate for the level of the award. (*Chapter 4*)

Academic Assessors (AA)

An independent academic or professional expert, with considerable and recent experience in tertiary and/ or professional education, appointed by HKU SPACE to advise on the assessment process of a programme or a group of programmes or a component module. The aim is to maintain the academic standard at a level comparable to that of similar programmes elsewhere. (*Chapter 5*)

Academic Board

A committee of the Senate with the power and duty to review the academic objectives and policies of the University of Hong Kong, and their continuing validity in the context of proposals for its academic development and growth in student numbers. It also reviews proposals for new academic programmes or services. (*Chapters 3 and 4*)

Academic Committee (AC)

A committee for each programme or a group of programmes for monitoring academic standards, reviewing teaching and learning processes, and advising the management on any matters concerning the quality of the programme. The AC is also responsible for approving programme changes under its remit. (*Chapters 4 and 5*)

Approval-in-Principle

Agreement by the School Academic and Management Board that further development of a proposed programme can proceed with a view to initiating the formal quality assurance procedures for academic approval. (*Chapter 4*)

Award-bearing Programme

A programme which gives a qualification such as a degree, diploma, or certificate to students who complete it successfully. (*Chapter 4*)

Board for Continuing and Professional Education and Lifelong Learning (Board for CPE&LL)

A committee of the Senate for advising the Senate on policy issues relating to continuing and professional education and lifelong learning. It has the responsibility for the academic activities of the School, including approval of new programmes. (*Chapters 3 and 4*)

Board of Examiners (BoE)

The committee for each programme or a group of programmes with the power and duty to assess and determine the performance outcome of students. (*Chapter 5*)

College

A college is an academic entity established with various subject groups under the School's strategic direction for programme delivery. It is responsible for all aspects of programme management and development works, administrative matters and budgetary control of programmes under its remit. (*Chapters 2, 3 and 4*)

College Academic Board (CAB)

A forum for senior academic staff in each college to consider and approve new programme proposals, to monitor and oversee the implementation of QA activities governing the development and management of programmes and courses, and to monitor the implementation of annual College academic development plan. (*Chapters 2, 3 and 4*)

Conditions of Approval

The requirements stated by a Programme Validation Panel (in case of a new programme) or a Programme Review Panel (in case of programme review) which must be fulfilled by the Programme Team in order to obtain approval to recommend the new programme to the Board for CPE&LL, or continue to offer a programme. (*Chapters 3 and 4*)

Course

The term is used in two senses:

- (a) a unit or a module within a curriculum;
- (b) a curriculum or a structured grouping of modules which form a coherent whole.

In HKU SPACE a course is usually regarded as a unit or a module within a curriculum or a structured curriculum not leading to an academic award. On the other hand, a coherent grouping of courses or modules the completion of which often leads to an academic award is referred to as a programme. Some partner institutions use “course” to carry the same meaning as “programme”. (*Chapter 4*)

Course Budget System (CBS)

The CBS is based on the academic structure of colleges and subject groups. It is a system of regular budgeting and monitoring of financial performance, for the purpose of financial management of the School. (*Chapter 4*)

Course Coordinator/ Course Director

A person with considerable academic and/or professional standing appointed by HKU SPACE to coordinate the academic and related issues of a programme. The appointment is often on a part-time or honorary basis. (*Chapter 4*)

Credit(s)

Credits means the weight assigned to each module relative to the total study load of a programme. The value of one credit is considered as ten notional student hours which may include time for class contact, for self-study and for student workload associated with the programme. Students who satisfactorily complete modules earn the credits assigned to the modules. (*Chapter 4*)

Directorate

The senior management staff in HKU SPACE, comprising the Director, Deputy Directors and the School Secretary & Registrar. (*Chapter 3*)

External Examiner (EE)

An independent academic or professional expert, with considerable and recent experience in tertiary education teaching, appointed by HKU SPACE to give general academic advice on a programme, as well as on the assessment process. The aim is to maintain the academic standard at a level comparable to that of similar programmes elsewhere. (*Chapter 5*)

Faculty Board

A statutory committee responsible to the Senate for the teaching of the subjects assigned to the Faculty and reporting thereon to the Senate from time to time. It also advises the Senate on matters relating to the work of the Faculty. (*Chapter 4*)

Full-Time Equivalent (FTE)

The numbers of part-time students are converted into “full-time equivalents” for the purposes of student number calculation. The conversion factors are based upon programme length and other considerations, compared with full-time students of similar programmes. (*Chapter 4*)

Intensive Schools

A series of lectures or workshops conducted by academic staff for a continuous period of time, mostly during weekends. (*Chapter 4*)

Internal Consultative Committee (ICC)

A committee set up by the School Academic and Management Board to facilitate communication and collaboration among academic units within HKU SPACE in relation to academic activities. (*Chapter 4*)

Joint Consultative Committee of HKU SPACE and Faculties (JCC)

A committee set up by the Senate to facilitate communication and collaboration between HKU SPACE and faculties in the University, in relation to academic development and other issues relating to lifelong learning. (*Chapter 4*)

Joint Quality Review Committee (JQRC)

The Committee is an independent corporate quality assurance body established in August 2005 by the Heads of Universities Committee of Hong Kong constituted by the eight institutions under the aegis of the University Grants Committee. The formation of JQRC is a quality assurance initiative to provide for enhanced quality and greater public accountability in respect of their self-financed sub-degree programmes, which are offered through continuing education units and community colleges, or other departments of the institutions. JQRC upholds the principle of quality in education, and the principle of institutional and academic autonomy. It advocates the achievement of public accountability through self-regulation. (*Chapter 2*)

Learning Centres

Venues where programmes and courses are conducted by HKU SPACE. The Learning Centres are manned by School staff to support the programme logistics. (*Chapter 9*)

Module

A unit of academic study. A pre-determined combination of modules forms the content of a programme. (See “Course”) (*Chapter 4*)

Non-Award Bearing Programme

A programme that does not lead to a qualification. Assessment may or may not be conducted as part of the programme. Statements of Attendance or Statements of Achievement are normally issued to students who successfully completed the programme via attendance and via attendance with assessment respectively. (*Chapter 4*)

Non-local Higher and Professional Education (Regulation) Ordinance (NLHPE Ordinance)

The ordinance provides for regulation of non-local higher and professional education courses conducted in Hong Kong through a registration system operated by the Education Bureau of the HKSAR Government. Courses within the scope of the Ordinance are those leading to the award of non-local higher academic or professional qualifications. (*Chapters 3 and 4*)

Non-local Programme

A programme which originated from an institution outside Hong Kong. It is often the case that the programme has been conducted in the homeland of that institution and is “imported” into Hong Kong. (*Chapters 3 and 4*)

Partner

An institution or organisation that has entered into an academic collaboration agreement with HKU SPACE. Such partners may include local and non-local academic and professional institutions, and academic departments in the University of Hong Kong. (*Chapters 3 and 4*)

Professional Recognition

The award of a programme being accepted by professional institutions as fulfilling requirements for registration, attainment of professional qualifications, exemption from professional examinations and/or fulfillment of continuing professional development requirements. (*Chapter 4*)

Programme

A programme normally refers to a curriculum or a structured grouping of modules or units which form a coherent whole. An academic award is usually issued to students who successfully complete a programme. In some partnerships, a “course” is used by the partner institution to carry the same meaning as a “programme”. (*Chapter 4*)

Programme Definitive Document

A reference text for staff and teachers which describes the programme as it is approved for introduction. The text contains information about the programme including aims and objectives, award name, admission requirements, curriculum, delivery mode, assessment regulations and quality assurance mechanisms. Relevant sections of the Document may be used to compile the Student Handbook. (*Chapter 4*)

Programme Leader

An academic staff member in HKU SPACE who leads the Programme Team and is responsible for the overall development and management of a programme or a group of programmes. He/She is a member of the Admissions Committee, Academic Committee and the Board of Examiners for the programme(s). (*Chapter 3*)

Programme Monitoring Activities

The Programme Team is responsible for monitoring the quality of programme management, programme delivery and the student achievements throughout the year of study. The Team summarises and analyses the information on the monitoring activities including students and teachers’ views, external examiners and academic assessors’ feedback, and classroom teaching observation for presentation to the Academic Committee (AC) after a year of study. The AC discusses the nine standing items at the meeting and considers any major issues requiring the attention of the College Academic Board (CAB) and/or the Quality Assurance Committee (QAC). The major issues are highlighted and indicated in the side column of the AC Minutes which will be presented to the CAB. The major issues, good practices plus the CAB comments will be presented in an Overview Report to the QAC, and then the Board for Continuing and Professional Education and Lifelong Learning. (*Chapter 5*)

Programme Proposal

A written document with detailed information of a proposed programme's aims and objectives, contents, structure, minimum entry requirements, assessment regulations and other programme management and quality assurance issues. The document is used as the reference text in the academic approval process. *(Chapter 4)*

Programme Review

A process to scrutinise and evaluate a programme that has been conducted for a period of time to ensure that its academic standards and quality continue to be appropriate for the level of the award. All aspects of the programme will be scrutinised, including the syllabus, teachers' and students' feedback, and market demand for the purpose of considering the continuation or discontinuation of the programme. *(Chapter 7)*

Programme Review Panel (PRP)

A group of academics and professionals with appropriate expertise invited by the Quality Assurance Committee to consider and review the Programme Review Document, in particular the development plan prepared by the Programme Team. The PRP makes recommendation via the Quality Assurance Committee to the Board for Continuing and Professional Education and Lifelong Learning to continue the programme. *(Chapter 7)*

Programme Team

A group of academic staff involved in developing, launching, managing, monitoring and reviewing a programme. The Team is led by a Programme Leader. *(Chapter 3)*

Programme Validation

A process to scrutinise and evaluate new programmes to ensure that their academic standards and quality are appropriate for the level of award. Same as academic validation, the validation process is conducted before a programme is approved for introduction. *(Chapter 4)*

Programme Validation Panel (PVP)

A group of academics and professionals with appropriate expertise invited by the Quality Assurance Committee to consider a proposed programme with respect to its academic standard and related aspects, and to make a recommendation via the Quality Assurance Committee to the Board for Continuing and Professional Education and Lifelong Learning to introduce the programme. *(Chapter 4)*

Qualifications Framework (QF)

An internal system established by the School, with reference to the QF implemented by the HKSAR Government. The HKU SPACE QF provides relevant guiding principles for programme design. (*Chapter 4*)

Qualifications Register (QR)

QR is a register established by the Secretary for Education of the HKSAR under the Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications Ordinance for entering qualifications that are grouped by areas of study/training and/or by industry. QR provides information on qualifications recognised under the Hong Kong QF, including the learning programmes leading to these qualifications and the relevant operators. It also provides information on qualifications which may be awarded by assessment agencies appointed for conducting recognition of prior learning assessments.

Quality Assurance Committee (QAC)

Reporting to the Director of HKU SPACE and advising the Board for Continuing and Professional Education and Lifelong Learning, the Committee is responsible for developing quality assurance policies and promoting a culture of quality assurance in academic activities in HKU SPACE. (*Chapter 2*)

Quality Assurance Council

The Quality Assurance Council is one of the councils established by the University Grants Committee (UGC) to assure that the quality of educational experience in all first degree level programmes and above, however funded, offered in UGC-funded institutions is sustained and improved, and is at an internationally competitive level; and to encourage institutions to excel in this area of activity. (*Chapters 2 and 8*)

Quality Assurance Process Working Group (QAPWG)

The Working Group is responsible for the initial consideration of quality assurance policies, procedures and mechanisms prior to presentation to the Quality Assurance Committee for approval. (*Chapter 2*)

Quality Assurance Team (QA Team)

A team of staff assigned with the responsibility to facilitate the implementation of the HKU SPACE Quality Assurance System. The Team also supports the work of the QAC and the QAPWG. (*Chapter 2*)

School Academic and Management Board (SAM)

A committee set up by the HKU SPACE Director to consider and coordinate strategic academic development directions, academic policies and regulations. (*Chapters 3 and 4*)

Senate

Subject to the provisions of the University Ordinance and the statutes, and to the financial control of the Council, the Senate has the regulation of all matters relating to education in the University. It is the parent body of the Boards of Faculties and Boards of Studies which have the powers to make awards and, on the recommendation of the Boards of Faculties and Academic Development Committee, it establishes degree curricula. (*Chapter 4*)

Staff-Student Consultative Committee (SSCC)

A communication forum between students and staff of a programme, in which suggestions and issues of concern about the programme are discussed. (*Chapter 5*)

Student Hours

The length of a study programme, namely the hours devoted to the delivery of the programme by various teaching and learning methods including lectures, tutorials, workshops, seminars, and other practical activities, plus the estimated self-study and reading hours normally required by a student to complete the programme. (*Chapter 4*)

The University Grants Committee (UGC)

The University Grants Committee (UGC) of Hong Kong is a non-statutory advisory committee responsible for advising the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR) on the development and funding needs of higher education institutions in the SAR. (*Chapters 2 and 8*)